JANUARY 1965

Commentary

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VATICAN II & THE JEWS

A Commentary Report

F. E. CARTUS

Getting the Story in Vietnam: David Halberstam

THE TRAGIC LEGEND OF RECONSTRUCTION: Kenneth M. Stampp

SOVIET JEWRY: Maurice Friedberg/Aron Vergelis/Bertrand Russell

MY FATHER AND I: Nathan Asch

CHANGE OF HEART—A Story: Meyer Liben

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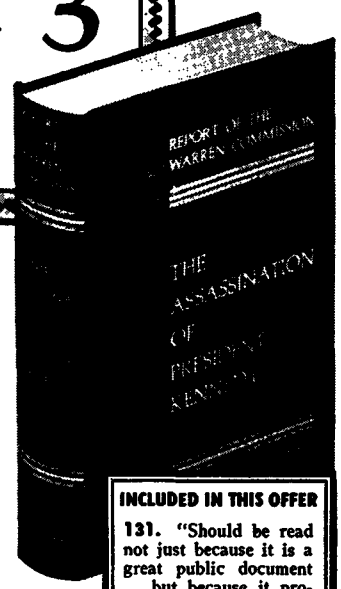

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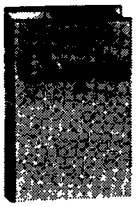

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Spain, the Right, & de Gaulle

To the Editor of Commentary:

Ray Alan's perceptive account "Spanish Anti-Semitism Today" [Aug. '64] is slightly marred by his curious reference to the French fascist ideologist, Dr. Lefèvre, as "the notorious Algiers plotter who played an important part in certain of the conspiracies that brought General de Gaulle to power." This is rather like describing the late Joseph Goebbels as the Nazi plotter "who helped to bring Churchill to power." The French Left has a mania for conspiracy, and ever since its debacle in 1958 it has been casting around for some means of making people forget its unheroic behavior and the speed with which it rallied to de Gaulle as the savior of the Republic (a decision ratified by 80 per cent of the electorate later that year). But even the more ardent consumers of literature such as *The Thirteen Plots of May 13th*, usually content themselves with hinting that de Gaulle exploited the sudden crumbling of the parliamentary regime. The notion that the handful of Gaullists in Algiers were involved in the weird plotting of the extreme Right is not seriously entertained by reputable critics of the General: they know him too well, and they also know that Vincent Auriol and Guy Mollet, at the head of the Socialist party, were the men who helped him into the saddle in 1958—having themselves lost control of the situation and feeling reasonably certain that he would rapidly subdue the Algiers plotters—as indeed he did.

The reverse side of this coin is the cult of Mendès-France, which, not surprisingly, is peddled by the same people who keep nagging at de Gaulle. Every serious political analyst in France—including the left-wing socialist group around the weekly *France-Observateur*—has known for years that Mendèsism was an unsuccessful precursor of Gaullism (and very largely backed by the same people). Yet the myth persists—though only outside France—that it somehow represented an alternative. How many people know that Mendès-France was kept in power by Gaullist votes? Not, it is safe to say, the readers of the leading American and British liberal journals, who for years have been fed a grotesquely distorted picture of French affairs with the result that in January 1963 (when the French vetoed Britain's entry into the EEC) their mental universe collapsed. True, they have not switched their allegiance to M. Defferre who, unlike Mendès-France, at least has a local base (he represents the Protestant bourgeoisie of Marseilles). But they still cannot tell the difference between Conservatives (right-center), Gaullists (left-center), and Radicals (dead center). Mr. Alan, who knows all about these subtle distinctions, and can probably differentiate even between the old-style republicanism of the *Dépêche de Toulouse*, the phony liberalism of *l'Express*, and the technocratic enthusiasms of the true Mendesians, has an excellent chance to enlighten his readers, instead of spreading stale legends concocted in Fleet Street.

George Lichtheim

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Spain's tradition of anti-Semitism is no longer news. . . . What is news, however, is that after four hundred years of attitudes like these, there is a movement in Spain today among the intelligentsia, educators, and certain members of the clergy to put an end to religious hatred, not only of Jews, but of all non-Catholics as well. An organization like *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana*, formed by Catholic priests and Jewish laymen to promote mutual understanding is an example of this new spirit. Another example is the symposium held last June at the Sephardic Institute of the University of Madrid; with the blessings of the Spanish government, scholars of Sephardic culture came from all over the world. The interest generated by that meeting should have far-reaching consequences as Spain grows more aware of her common heritage with the Sephardim. . . . Spain's rescue efforts during World War II, which saved the lives of

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thousands of Jewish refugees, should also be mentioned in this connection . . . as should the fact that Spain served in the 50's as a haven for North African Jews, fleeing persecution. . . .

HARRY A. EZRATTY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . During the year that I lived and studied in Spain (1963-4), I was certainly aware of the notorious periodical *Qué Pasa?* and of the medieval platitudes in daily conversation (*conspiración judía, pueblo deicida,* etc.)

On the other hand, recent efforts to erase anti-Semitism and re-evaluate the Jewish contribution to Hispanic civilization deserve to be emphasized. An order of French nuns, *Notre Dame de Sion,* whose mission is to combat anti-Semitism in education and mass communications and to foster Judaeo-Christian *rapprochement* now has, with Spanish ecclesiastical approval, a house in Madrid. . . .

On the official level, a proclamation signed by Franco himself was issued in May recognizing the importance to Spain of the Jewish cultural contribution and the significance of the Sephardim to Jewry as a whole; it also established a Jewish Museum in the historical *Sinagoga del Transito* (in Toledo) and a monument to Maimonides (in Cordoba).

This revival of Jewish culture did not arise spontaneously. It originated in the famous historical controversy between Américo Castro and Claudio Sánchez de Albornoz over the importance of the Semitic-Hispanic transculturation in the Middle Ages. The former maintained that it was decisive in the consolidation of the national character, thus defying and virtually revising traditional Spanish historiography. The repercussions of his writing are still being felt. A Sephardic exposition of Jewish objects from all over Spain was held in the *Biblioteca Nacional* in 1959, arousing such public and official interest that subsequently the government-sponsored Institute of Sephardic Studies was established. . . . At present there is talk of establishing a degree in Sephardic Studies at the University of Madrid, comparable to that in Hispanic Studies now offered there.

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. . . One must bear these examples in mind when speaking of the extremist tirades of *Juanpérez, Qué Pasa?,* and the like. . . . Mr. Alan rightly mentions the radically different attitude of Barcelona. . . . As the walls of the present regime show signs of crumbling, it is well to keep in mind these other currents that may, indeed, have already begun to come to the surface.

LORRAINE ELENA SILVERSHINE
South Hadley, Massachusetts

MR. ALAN writes:

I admire and agree with so much of what Mr. Lichtheim writes that it will probably be good for the sinews of my typewriter if I argue with him just this once over Dr. Lefèvre and General de Gaulle. The Goebbels analogy is quite false. Churchill's unswerving purpose was to defeat Goebbels and the Nazis. De Gaulle climbed to power over the shoulders of Salan, Lagaillarde, Soustelle, and the Algiers plotters—not the least important of whom was Dr. Lefèvre. But for them de Gaulle would not be President of France (unless, of course, some other crisis had opened the way for him). By May 13, 1958, de Gaulle's cause had become discredited as a result of the crude, irresponsible efforts of his parliamentary and journalistic henchmen (notably Soustelle and Debré) to weaken and discredit the Republic. A few weeks before the Algiers coup the Gaullists had received only a fraction of the poll in nationwide local elections (fought, even more than in Britain, on party lines).

I would not suggest that Dr. Lefèvre and other plotters were inspired by de Gaulle or in contact with him before May 1958. But in the first careless rapture of victory, before de Gaulle had broken with his Algiers allies, ardent Gaullist publicists proudly described the general's *chef de cabinet* (the head of his personal staff) as the "*chef d'orchestre*" who coordinated the main civil and military plots which subverted the Fourth Republic. The same Gaullist publicists quoted another member of de Gaulle's staff as declaring, shortly after May 13, 1958, that "he is in close touch with Algiers and is fully informed as to what is being prepared" and in contact with General Miquel, whom Salan had

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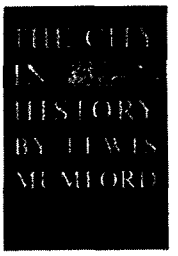

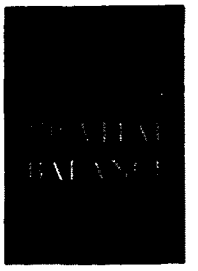

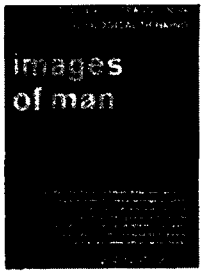

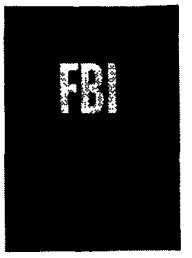

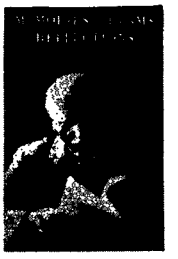

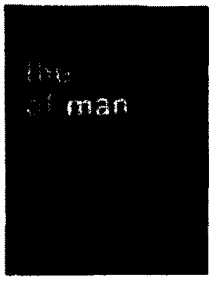

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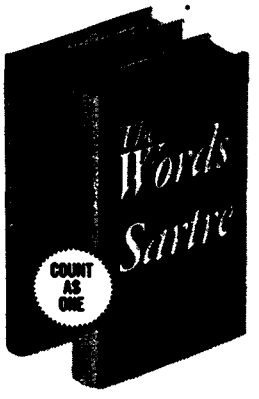

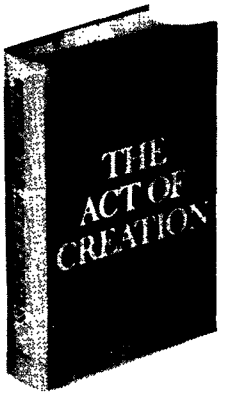

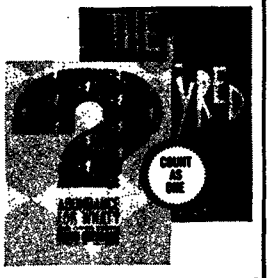

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appointed to command the "March on Paris" from the southwest. When the Algiers coup appeared to be petering out, and Salan and Massu were ready to repair the breach—it was mainly a matter of finding a scapegoat—de Gaulle's declaration of May 15 gave the plotters fresh hope and a breathing space in which to carry out the admonitory Corsican *putsch*. While Salan and his fellow mutineers were wearing Premier Pflimlin down with threats of military action in France, de Gaulle was demanding the capitulation of the regime—not of the plotters—and declaring that, if the government failed to yield, "responsibility for the events which follow" would fall on the democratic leaders who refused to hold talks with him—not on the plotters. Vincent Auriol, who was my neighbor at the time, had no illusions about de Gaulle; his main concern was to avoid civil war.

Even if Mr. Lichtheim dismisses most of the above as "legend," he cannot overlook the fact that, almost alone among France's elder statesmen and respected public figures, de Gaulle refused to condemn the mutineers and plotters—until they mutinied and plotted against him. He cannot deny that de Gaulle exploited the crisis the plotters and "ultras" provoked, adopted them as allies, allowed the Gaullist party to appropriate—and win an election on—their *Algérie française* platform (even using the slogan himself), and then liquidated his allies as cynically as a Khrushchev or a Nasser. I cannot believe that Mr. Lichtheim would applaud Sir Alec Douglas-Home or Senator Goldwater if either of them adopted such tactics in order to gain power. Why insult France by seeming to assume that the conduct of a French political leader must necessarily be evaluated on a lower ethical plane? This sort of insult to France is, incidentally, the rock on which Gaullism is founded: scores of Gaullists have told me that, *bien sûr*, Frenchmen are less mature politically than Englishmen and Scandinavians, they can't be trusted with intricate representative institutions, they must have a chief who knows how to impose himself. . . .

What Fleet Street has to do with this I don't know. Despite the commercial pressures that have produced its gutter-wallowing mastodons, a few British papers—liberal and other—are still surprisingly good, and the coverage of French affairs by journals such as the *Observer*, *Economist*, *Sunday Times*, and *Guardian* is nowhere appreciated more than in France where the demand for them soars whenever there is a crisis and the local press and radio clam up.

The Price of Survival

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Students of English literature have reason to be grateful that David Daiches's writings on Burns or Stevenson are free of the moral frivolity which he habitually brings to his discussion of Jewish questions. In his remarkable reply to Rabbi Agus's letter ["Letters from Readers," Aug. '64] he notes Rabbi Agus's failure to define *the* true tradition in Jewish religious history, and then asks, petulantly, whether "two thousand years of suffering, culminating in the catastrophe of the six million" was not an appalling "price" to pay for the preservation of a tradition so resistant to definition.

When Jewish writers are dealing with cultures other than their own, they seem quite as capable as other people of perceiving . . . that certain endowments of human nature, unless they have some representative among the nations or peoples of the world, tend to be pushed out of sight. But when Jewish writers are dealing with their own culture, they are blinded to this simple truth. . . . I wonder whether, if the notoriously unassimilable Scottish people were to be decimated, Mr. Daiches would scold *them* for having desired to preserve a tradition which produced people as "mutually contradictory" as Sir Walter Scott and James Mill.

The simplistic view of the relation between a people and its culture implied in Mr. Daiches's letter is merely irritating; but the resistance to the awareness of evil which is also implied makes one despair.

EDWARD ALEXANDER
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Non-believers are like politicians who attempt to oust the party in power by demanding of it the answer to questions which they, too, are unable to answer. . . . David Daiches asks: "Does it require the perpetual, separate existence in the

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diaspora of the Peculiar People? Two thousand years of suffering, culminating in the catastrophe of the six million, represent an appalling price. Exactly what was it paid for?" . . . Mr. Daiches may not find enough that is distinctive in Judaism to justify survival as a Jew. But there are many who do not need to "darken counsel with words" (Job) to "justify" their will to be followers of Judaism. Its way of life provides them with meaning, sanctity, and joy in life. . . .

The question asked by non-believers exists for all human beings. Rather than leading us to reject what provides most meaning to life, they should lead us to humility about the adequacy of our minds . . . to grasp the total cosmic purpose. . . .

(RABBI) NATHAN BARACK
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Intelligence & Race

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Martin Mayer [in his review of *The Geography of Intellect* by Weyl and Possony, July '64] uses the "facts" of psychometric statistics to make the case for Negro mental inferiority. Racial facts bite, so no further argument is needed.

Mayer does well to criticize the Possony-Weyl book on the inadequacy of their evidence. He would have done better to condemn it on its merits. Instead he notes that their "information content is good in the 40 or so pages which contain the essence of the case" and that the authors "miss a good deal of data that would be persuasive for their case." I suspect Mr. Mayer is setting himself up to do a better job. . . . "We could use a hard, strong statement of the racist case," he writes. . . .

". . . Whether one agrees with it or not," Mr. Mayer continues, "there is a reasonable argument that some races are for modern practical purposes less capable than others." . . . What is Mr. Mayer's point? Why the need for a strong racist case, unless he subscribes to it or suspects he should? But even then, to what consequence—if not to challenge the course of integrated education and propose to divert Negro education from the "modern practical purposes" for which Negroes are less capable, to other purposes. . . .

Mr. Mayer is apparently strongly committed to those "modern practical purposes" and thinks the white educational system should also be. Does he fear that

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school integration without the advice of a hard and strong racist case will impair our "sophisticated industrial society"? By contaminating the education of capable whites, perhaps?

Mr. Mayer's . . . discussion is not, as he pretends, about "psychometric statistics." It is a defense of "modern practical purposes." Whose "modern practical purposes"? Mr. Mayer's? General Motors'? The Joint Chiefs of Staff's? Or the racially incapable millions? Should not such "purposes" in a democratic society reflect the shared values of all? Or does Mr. Mayer also suggest that Negroes may be mentally incapable of political decision as well?. . .

As for our industrial society which Mr. Mayer values so highly, he embodies its principal form of sophistication—the ability to hide interest, or in this case contempt, behind a fan dance of principles and sentiments. . . .

MILTON KOTLER
Institute for Policy Studies
Washington, D.C.

MR. MAYER *writes*:

For the benefit of those who, like Mr. Kotler, did not read my review, its point was that the movement for racial justice has been handicapped by the absence of respectable opposition. As I wrote, "Those of us who are quite sure that all Negro disabilities have their roots in chattel slavery and systematic repression—but who can see, too, that years of continuously imaginative work will be required to repair the damage—need a relatively complete list of what it is that we shall overcome. And only a racist would have the heart to write a book about it." Mr. Kotler evidently believes that screaming in the void (which I believe is called "Utopian thinking" at his institution) will help us. "As we know," he writes, "racial facts bite"—therefore we should ignore them. I more than doubt it.

On the general issue, it is always foolish to say that your opponents do not have a reasonable argument—the lawyer who goes to trial not respecting the case on the other side fights at a severe disadvantage. Specifically, there is no question that certain cultures are ill-adapted to survival under the impact of modern medicine—we can define "modern practical purposes" easily enough as staying alive and functioning on an earth which already has three and a quarter billion inhabitants, a statement with many implications in terms of social organization and individual skill. Reasonable men can believe that there is some relationship between culture and race; I don't, myself. As I pointed out in the review: "Most physical anthropologists believe that the races of man are roughly equivalent in their capacity for mental adaptation. People who use the low average IQ scores of Negro and Amerindian populations as proofs of racial inferiority are confusing correlations with causes"—and I then gave an example.

But this does not mean that the data for the correlations do not exist and are not valuable. What Mr. Kotler calls "the course of integrated education" has been rocky and downhill in part because the people responsible for making the decisions have been unwilling to face evidence. What happens now in the North is not "integration" at all; it is desegregation followed by resegregation, sometimes visible, sometimes hidden behind the walls of the school building. During this process some hundreds of thousands of white and colored kids personally experience the fact that most Negro children do substantially worse than most white children in schools as now constituted. This is no help in race relations or anything else; the Negro children's gains directly after transfer fade more or less rapidly away. To achieve integration, obviously, we must change the schools. As one trying to do just that, helping to speed integration in *classrooms* in the area where I have a degree of responsibility, I wonder how anybody thinks he can know what changes we need and how to push this self-sticking inertia machine unless he bases his activities on reality.

In this magazine, I once denounced Conant's Booker T. Washington ("teach-'em-a-trade") approach to Negro education, and I feel strongly that our need is to find ways to give Negro American children the same sort of education we give white American children. In the process, the education of both should be substantially improved. I think we must recognize, however, that those who demand a totally different education for a totally different society are really saying with Conant that we

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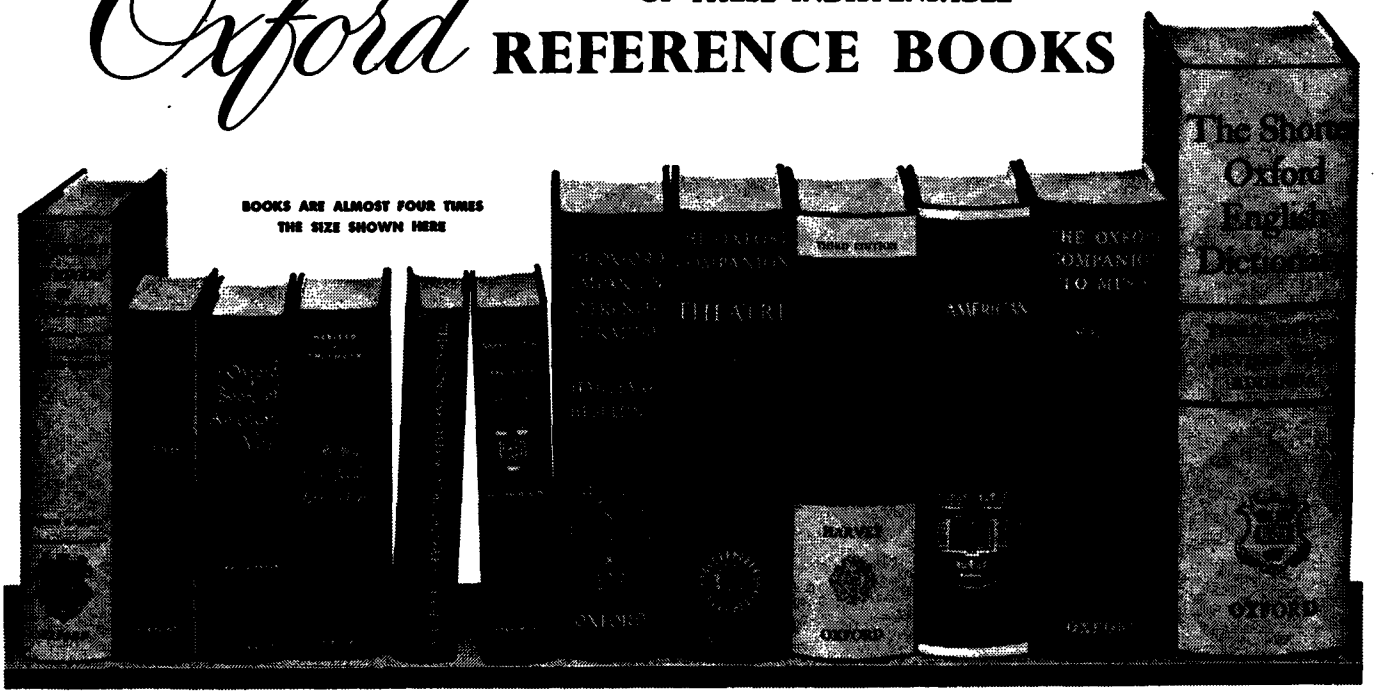

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cannot handle the difficulties presented by the existing condition of the Negro American population. The notion that any society will remake itself drastically for the presumed benefit of a 10 per cent minority is far worse than childish: it is stupid. It looks like a call to action, but those (relatively few) who respond find that there is no significant action possible under present conditions, and the call quickly becomes a counsel of despair, expressed by angry praise of violence over the demitasse. I save my contempt for that.

Mission Schools in Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Having recently returned from Israel where my husband was a Fulbright lecturer, I would like to add to Rabbi Weiner's experience with the Israelis and the missionary schools ["Christian Schools & Israeli Children," July '64].

We lived in one of the newer quarters of Tel Aviv and the nearest English-speaking school, to which we sent our son, was run by the Church of Scotland in Jaffa. It had been there a hundred years, survived numerous changes in the tenancy of the Holy Land, and now served primarily for the children of the diplomatic communty. Its students came from thirty-seven countries, including Ghana.

At no time did we detect any attempt to convert, subvert, or expose the children to Christian propaganda. On the contrary—the Bible stories were from the Old Testament, the Jewish holidays were scrupulously observed, etc.—all to no avail with the surrounding community. The school was physically attacked by religious zealots, the . . . headmistress received threats of violence and warnings to leave, and we ourselves were subjected to ruthless pressure by our neighbors to withdraw our son. In an almost Kafkaesque interview with my educated neighbor, I was informed that only my innocence, . . . gullibility, . . . stupidity, prevented me from seeing the danger that this school represented to the state.

We happened at the time to have befriended a small boy living in the same quarter whose mother sent him to the Church of Scotland School because he was badly crippled and could spend the night at their hostel when she worked late. Occasionally we brought him home from school in our car, which further inflamed the community and seemed to constitute "American" endorsement of the missions. Their hostility toward us never abated. . . . During Christmas week my neighbors foregathered in front of my house and while those who could speak English chanted "You love Jesus," old and young alike joined in stoning my children as they came out the door.

ELEANOR WIDMER
La Jolla, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . At first it seems that Rabbi Weiner is being careful about presenting all sides to the controversy. However, he leaves this task in the middle to discuss the reaction of Orthodoxy, . . . resorting to amateur psychologizing for a new and startling accusation: the "aggressive activism" of Orthodoxy is simply a "cover-up for . . . guilt and frustration" that comes from cognizance that they . . . are agreeing to compromise on the Law. . . ." Were the Rabbi as much of an expert in *Halakhah* as he claims to be, he would know that a ship, considered a home-away-from-home by the *Halakhah,* is unquestionably allowed to proceed on its voyage even on the Sabbath. . . .

Rabbi Weiner also states that "added to the guilt is the knowledge that the religious camp is losing its battle." . . . [But] if religion in general is on the wane (as he seems to imply) it is not simply a loss to a political grouping labeled the "Orthodox camp," but should be felt as a loss to all factions of Judaism. That Orthodoxy is suddenly moving to the extreme right . . . is not the factor that may destroy the unity of the Jews. Rather it is to be found in the violent and extreme reaction of those American Conservative and Reform groups that combined . . . in the now infamous cablegram denouncing the "fanatical" Orthodox for their action contra the missions. If one is concerned with reactions, let me point out that deep sadness and shock were the reactions of the Orthodox to this condemnation. . . .

BENJAMIN AARON MAYER
Wurzweiler School of Social Work
Yeshiva University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I am weary of people who criticize "ghetto Judaism" on the one hand and practice it on the

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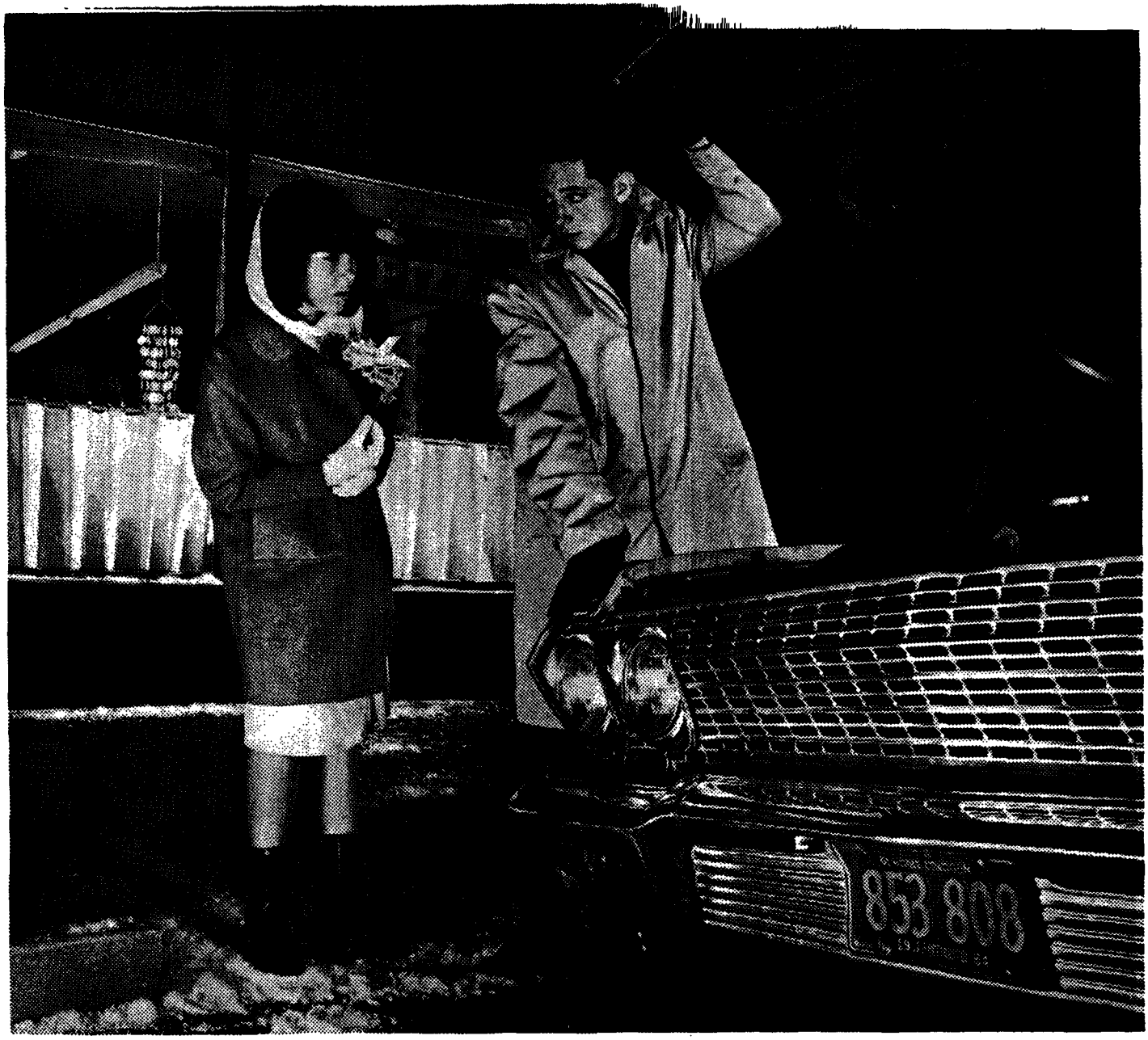

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other. Rabbi Weiner is so fearful of annoying the Christian missions in Israel that he prefers to deny their dangers rather than face reality. . . .

It would be of greater interest if COMMENTARY would give equal space to the philosophy of Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kuk, who at least has the good sense to show anger at such an outrage as Christian missions on Israeli soil, even if their success be confined to one solitary conversion.

SARA ZUCKERMAN
Miami Beach, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In Rabbi Weiner's article . . . Jewish converts to Christianity are presented as dignified and forceful, meeting in a lovely building to sing hymns, etc., etc., while Orthodox Jews are to be found behind locked doors engaged in activities like falsifying documents. Even Rabbi Kuk has fallen from grace. . . . Rabbi Weiner's article was as much a criticism and denial of Jewish Orthodoxy as it was a report on the problem of missionaries in Israel.

JOSEPH M. KATZ
Downey, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Herbert Weiner's article is more insidious in its implications than in what it purports to be—an objective examination of missionary activities among Israeli children.

Reading it, my feeling was inescapable that in another time, and in another country, Weiner would be exhorting our co-religionists not to be alarmed, those trains were only taking people to work-camps. . . .

Weiner's thinly veiled threat, in the very last line of his piece, that many of his ilk are ready to leave the fold unless the religious elements in Israel change their ways, is possibly the best argument against Reform and Conservatism to come along in many a year. . . .

WALTER MEYER
New York City

RABBI WEINER *writes*:

The main point of my article was that some Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews in Israel and the United States have vitiated a legitimate case against some Christian missionaries in Israel by substituting emotional demagoguery for facts. I fear that the above letters only substantiate this thesis.

The one substantive criticism I can find in them relates to the *halakhic* problem posed by an Israeli ship traveling on the Sabbath. Since I am not and never claimed to be "an expert in *Halakha*," I checked the matter with those who are and would suggest that Mr. Mayer do the same. He will find that the situation is as I described it in my article. A ship manned by a Jewish crew is by no means "unquestionably allowed to proceed on its voyage even on the Sabbath."

Integration & Education

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations both to the author and to COMMENTARY for publishing Midge Decter's excellent article ["The Negro & The New York Schools," Sept. '64]. . . . It provides a very good summary of the situation and should go a long way to help promote understanding both as to the difficulty of finding solutions and at the same time the vital importance of finding solutions.

FRANCIS KEPPEL
United States Commissioner of Education
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Miss Decter presents a very fine analysis of the situation in New York and, I am sure, one that will contribute to increased understanding of the difficult and complex problem facing the city's public school system.

There is an error in reference to me which I would like to point out. Miss Decter states that I "defined a racially balanced school as one having a student body no more than 50 per cent non-white." I have never made any such definition. In my letter of June 1963, requesting reports on the racial composition of schools from school systems in the state, I defined *for the purposes of the report* a racially imbalanced school as one having 50 per cent or more Negro students enrolled. The 50 per cent figure was used as a statistical point of reference to identify those schools from which relevant information was requested, not as a definition of racial imbalance. . . .

JAMES E. ALLEN, JR.
Commissioner of Education
Albany, New York

[*More correspondence on Miss Decter's article will appear in our next issue.*]

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A COMMENTARY REPORT

VATICAN II & THE JEWS

F. E. CARTUS

On November 20, 1964—the last day of the third session of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council in Rome—the highest legislative and representative body of the Roman Catholic Church, by the overwhelming vote of 1893 to 99, approved of a document condemning "hatred and persecutions of Jews, whether they arose in former or in our own days," affirming the validity of Judaism as a religious way of life with which Catholics must establish relations of "mutual knowledge and respect," and repudiating the idea of "the Jewish people as one rejected, cursed, or guilty of deicide." This text, running a little more than six paragraphs, marked a turning point in the history of the Church, for in and through it a tacit but definitive judgment was passed on countless generations of Popes, Kings, Church Fathers, Saints, writers, theologians, and ordinary Christians; on them and on their attitude to Jews and Judaism.

The declaration approved by the Council Fathers stood in the most dramatic contrast to a theological tradition which has dominated Catholic thinking about Jews for 1900 years. According to that tradition God chose the Jewish people in the time of Abraham to serve as a *preparatory* stage for the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, His Son, and the establishment of the Catholic Church. Once Christ came, all that was valuable and effective for human salvation was transferred from Judaism to the new Church. The Ancient Alliance between God and Israel was voided and replaced by the New Alliance between the Church and God. The Jews, as the original Chosen People, should have been the first Christians, but they elected instead to repudiate Christ. They did not accept his doctrine; they opposed him during his lifetime; they instigated his arrest; they clamored for his execution; they acquiesced in his crucifixion. For these sins they were punished in three ways by God: they ceased to be the Chosen People; they were blinded so that they could not see the truth of Christianity; they were dispersed among the nations, never to be reunited until the end of time when Christ will return to this world to judge the living and the dead. At the end of time, they will be converted as a *group*, but until that day they will remain blinded, dispersed, and persecuted as a sign that God has entrusted salvation to the Church alone, and that He punishes obduracy.

Roman Catholic believers drew a whole range of practical conclusions from these premises. The Jews as a people—not only the Jews of Christ's time but Jews of all time—were guilty of having killed Christ, the God-man: theologically speaking, they were deicides. Second, because they were cursed by God to remain dispersed among the nations until the end of time, the very existence of a Jewish state must be against God's will, and Israel must therefore be doomed to extinction after a short while. Third, the sufferings of the Jews were to be understood as part of their punishment for the crime of having rejected Christ and their original destiny. Fourth, Judaism was a useless thing, an invalid ethic, an invalid way of life, an invalid method of worship, which had been rendered pointless by the advent of Christ. And in the long history of Jewish-Christian relations more phantasmagoric conclusions still were frequently drawn. The Jews were allied with the devil, they were always entering into conspiracies—with Freemasons, with Communists, with atheists, with secularists—for the sole purpose of destroying the Church and wiping Christianity off the face of the earth.

For the conservative Catholic mind, then—the mind whose outlook is to be found reflected in any official Roman Catholic manual of theology and which governs the thinking of the Papal government, or Curia as it is called—Judaism is not a non-Christian religion like any other—like Buddhism, Hinduism, or Islam. It was geared to Christ before he came and it remains geared to Christ and his second coming. Buddhists, Hindus, and Moslems should be Catholics because they are *men*, but Jews should be Catholics because they are *Jews*. Hence the pertinacity of the general Curial opposition to a declaration on the Jews and hence the particular pertinacity of the conversionist note in the several of the many drafts of the text that were eventually produced.

The "rain" of opposition to which Pope Paul VI was overheard referring after the November 20 vote, thus had not waited until then to fall. It

F. E. CARTUS is the pseudonym of a Roman Catholic observer who has watched developments at the Ecumenical Council very closely.

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had, in fact, been hammering steadily on the dome of St. Peter's for three years—ever since the idea of a document on the Jews was first launched. But neither has opposition ceased with the adoption of the document by the plenary assembly. The Bishops have declared their will, but until their will is ratified by the Pope in solemn promulgation —an act which has been reserved for the fourth and final session of the Council, tentatively scheduled to be held in the fall of 1965—the document will not represent the official voice of the Church. Nevertheless, the adoption was itself of major historical importance and signified the culmination of a bitterly intense struggle which started shortly after the accession of John XXIII to the Papal throne.

THE STORY of the document goes back originally to the work of the late Jules Isaac, a French-Jewish scholar whose studies had convinced him that official Catholic teaching was shot through with several basically anti-Semitic ideas: that the Jews were collectively accursed by God for the crime of deicide and that it was God's command that they suffer and be dispersed for all time. In 1947, Isaac organized the Seelisberg Conference (in Switzerland) at which the participants drew up the famous Ten Points of ideal Christian behavior toward the Jews. (These ten points incorporated Isaac's chief findings about the traditional Christian attitude to Jews, and they formed the substance of the text that was finally adopted last November.)

Pursuing his campaign, Isaac met with Pius XII at Castelgandolfo in 1949 and pleaded with him to change certain injurious phrases concerning the Jews in Catholic prayers. Pius, in a wholly characteristic gesture, refused to change the actual wording but directed that new and less offensive translations be made. Fourteen years later, at the Good Friday ceremonies in St. Peter's, when the offensive words were sung by the Sistine Choir, John XXIII—and this was characteristic of *him*—flushed with anger, called the ceremonies to a halt, and had the Choir repeat the prayer with the offensive phrases omitted. They have since been excised altogether.

The spirit of John XXIII, or *giovannismo* as it was called, rested on the late Pope's conviction that the Roman Catholic Church in the world of the late 50's was living in an ever-deepening spiritual isolation. On the one hand, she refused to meet any non-Roman Catholic Christian on any basis but that of conversion to Catholicism. On the other hand, she regarded the rest of the world as positively leagued against her existence and the truth she professed. John also saw that while this was the *official* attitude of the Roman Church, the vast bulk of Roman Catholics had been growing increasingly restive, increasingly uncomfortable, and increasingly impatient with the traditional mentality. It was to bring this mentality more closely into line with the realities of the day and the needs and sentiments of the contemporary Catholic that John decided in 1959 to call an Ecumenical Council in Rome.

As time went on, the basic purposes of the coming Council became clear. Apart from internationalizing his own Roman government and making Church doctrine and worship intelligible to moderns, John wished to open up the Church to the outside world, to call off the hostilities and opposition that kept the world at a distance, and to effect a *rapprochement* with all men not under the ecclesiastical sway of Rome. As a practical policy, however, such a *rapprochement* had one major difficulty to face. Because the Roman Catholic Church claims to be the only true religion, the necessary prelude to any dialogue with it had always been submission to this preliminary truth. John wished to change all that. The Church would go on believing and claiming that it was the one true religion, and it would go on praying and hoping that all men might finally come to see that truth. But as John understood, no real dialogue between the Church and other communities could be based on the condition that they approach the Church with the intention of being converted. Nor could genuine dialogue be grounded in some utilitarian aim—mutual defense or the attainment of common sociological progress. The new basis that John wished to establish was summed up in a phrase coined by his close associate, Augustin Cardinal Bea: *to see the truth lovingly*. That is, each party to the dialogue was to approach the other with two predispositions: with *love* and with a desire to *know*. That was all—but it implied an entire theory of religious liberty: the right of any human being to worship God in the way his conscience dictated, and his right to be respected by all others in his chosen way. To implement these principles, John, on March 25, 1960, entrusted to Cardinal Bea the formation of a special secretariat for the promotion of relations with other Christian churches and called it the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity (SECU).

So far as the Jews in particular were concerned, John's thinking was influenced by an interview with Jules Isaac (on June 13 of the same year) at which Isaac submitted a long dossier to him on Jewish-Christian relations and, among other things, petitioned him to set up a special secretariat to deal with those relations. Partly as a result of this interview, John determined that, if not a secretariat, the Church should find some other concrete institutional means by which Jews and Roman Catholics could enter into relations of mutual knowledge and esteem, that the Council should issue a statement on Jews and Judaism, and that Jewish observers should be invited to assist at the Council sessions. By November, however, several modifications had been imposed on these plans by circumstances. The conservative element in the Vatican—which dominates the Curia—would

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not hear of a special secretariat for Judaism; they saw it as the thin end of a wedge opening the door to an alien mentality and ultimately to diplomatic recognition of Israel. John therefore decided that the best course would be to assign the responsibility for drawing up a document on Jewish-Christian relations to Bea's new secretariat.

However, the very idea of a document on the Jews was itself repellent to the conservatives in the Curia; in their view the doctrine of the Church with respect to the Jews was quite clear already. Trouble also came from Cairo. News of Isaac's visit, of John's subsequent proposals, of Bea's preliminary contacts with Jewish representatives filtered through. The Voice of the Arabs, Nasser's powerful broadcasting station, began issuing statements denouncing the "world Zionist plot to capitalize on the Vatican Council in order to further the oppression of the Palestinian refugees." The Egyptian and Lebanese ambassadors in Rome acquainted the Vatican with their government's viewpoint: no secretariat to deal with Jewish-Christian relations nor any document on the Jews would be acceptable to the Arab people; neither would the idea of Jewish observers at the Council be welcome. In spite of all this, John held fast and asked Bea to organize relations and contacts with competent Jewish representatives, and to set up a section of the SECU which would work on the proposed document.

John's own conception of the essentials of such a document may be gauged by the act of reparation which he composed three months before his death in 1963 and which he originally intended to have read aloud in all Roman Catholic churches of the world on a fixed date. "We are conscious today that many many centuries of blindness have cloaked our eyes so that we can no longer either see the beauty of Thy Chosen People nor recognize in their faces the features of our privileged brethren. We realize that the mark of Cain stands upon our foreheads. Across the centuries our brother Abel has lain in the blood which we drew or shed the tears we caused by forgetting Thy Love. Forgive us for the curse we falsely attached to their name as Jews. Forgive us for crucifying Thee a second time in their flesh. For we knew not what we did. . . ." It is against this superb Christian statement, with its acknowledgment of past injustices, its recognition of false accusations, and its affirmation of the intrinsic value of Judaism, that the various drafts of the document on the Jews must be measured.

THE FIRST OF THESE drafts was drawn up in 1961. While written with a certain benevolence, it emphasized the dignity of Judaism only in relation to Christianity, and it failed to pin down and kill the basic tenets of anti-Semitism. Even Bea and his collaborators in the SECU, who were receiving a good deal of material from the American Jewish Committee and other Jewish sources concerning the anti-Semitic elements in Catholic prayers and literature, felt that the draft they had produced lacked the necessary force. For the conservatives, however, it had all too much force, and by September of 1961 it had generated one of their first big clashes with the Pope. The argument they reportedly put to him was subtle and far-reaching in its intent: nothing, they said, must be done to disturb the simple piety of Christians or the Church's position in the Middle East; it was a good idea to issue a general statement on all non-Christian religions, including Judaism, but the SECU was not the body to produce such a statement. The SECU—reports of their argument went on—could not submit a document to the Council legally, for it was neither a Council commission nor an organ of the Holy Father's government. It was, in fact, an anomaly, a para-ecclesiastical growth that needed to be regulated. At all events, the conservatives continued, the preparatory work for the Council could not possibly be performed efficiently for any date earlier than 1965. The Holy Father should therefore fix that year for the opening of the Council.

John reacted swiftly and rather ruthlessly. The Council would begin in 1962. It would make a statement specifically on the Jewish problem, the outlines of which were announced in March 1962 to the Central Preparatory Commission (CPC), the organizing body of the coming Council. After the Council, a permanent secretariat would be established to concern itself with relations with Jews in the ethical and religious fields. Meanwhile, Bea's SECU would be given the status of a permanent conciliar commission. It would be empowered to invite observers from non-Roman Catholic and non-Christian bodies, and to submit documents to the Council of its own accord. It would not be subject to the Theological Commission which, under the tight control of Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani, was a main bastion of traditionalism and anti-*giovannismo*.

The progress of affairs alarmed the conservative elements both within the Vatican and in the Church in general—particularly in Italy and Spain. Nasser, who was kept informed of happenings in Rome, was also disturbed. Money already had come from Cairo and from certain interested sources in Northern Italy and Spain to finance the publication of an anti-Semitic book entitled *Plot against the Church*. But this would only appear in the autumn during the first session of the Council. Something must be done at this moment, it was felt, before things got out of hand.

The intransigent opposition of the Arab world to a document on the Jews was—and is—based on the fear that it might imply or lead to Vatican recognition of Israel: for if a Christian could be pro-Jewish, he could also be pro-Israel. And the Vatican is sensitive to Arab pressure for a variety of reasons. First of all, most of the Catholics in the Middle East live in Arab lands, speak Arabic as

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their daily language, are drawn from Moslem stock. The major Catholic Holy Places are in Jordan. The vast majority of Church possessions in the Middle East—lands, monasteries, schools, churches—are in Arab lands. And the vast majority of Christian communities not yet in communion with Rome live in Arab lands and partake of Arabic culture. Secondly, the Vatican sees Nasser as a bulwark against Communism in the Middle East, the only alternative to a series of Communist governments in that area. Finally, Vatican foreign policy is tied to the foreign policy of Italy, which means, among other things, that the Church's financial interests are involved with those of Italian capital—and the natural markets of Italy lie along the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean, the lands of the Maghreb and the Levant, whose Arab rulers must be kept as friendly as possible.

It would be inaccurate and misleading to detach these political considerations from the theological prejudices and axioms of Vatican conservative thinking; the connections are deep. Nevertheless, for the conservative Catholic mind, the trouble lay primarily with the contents of the proposed document on the Jews, which was looking more and more like a complete rejection of traditional Catholic doctrine: Cardinal Bea was actually proposing to condemn the idea that Jews were Christ-killers. And indeed, Bea had had difficulty in his own secretariat on this point. Some members were against it, and at one stage discussion was discontinued as being too thorny. How could a suitable formula be found to reconcile such a condemnation with the Gospels as they had always been interpreted? The Italian paper, *L'Avvenire d'Italia,* flatly declared that "it is almost inconceivable that the Council should make a statement on the issue of collective deicide." Yet the fact is that by early 1962 precisely such a statement had been included in the document.

IT IS CERTAIN that if nothing disastrous had happened between May and October, the document on the Jews would have been proposed with John's blessing and accepted at that session. But one small incident occurred which was seized on by the opponents of Bea's whole ecumenical vision and John's idea of the Council, and used for a series of delaying tactics that prevented the document from ever coming up in the Council during John's lifetime.

There had been talk for over two years now of inviting Jewish observers to the Council. Some Jewish organizations were in favor of the action, others were against it. On June 12, the World Jewish Congress announced that it had chosen Chaim Vardi, an official of the Israeli Ministry of Cults, to represent the WJC as its observer at the Council. On the same day the CPC in Rome shelved not only the proposals Bea had prepared concerning the invitation of Jewish observers, but also his proposals concerning the document on the Jews and the document on religious liberty. This meant that neither of these documents would come up for discussion at the first session.

It has been said more than once, both in public and in private, that it was Jewish imprudence in appointing an Israeli (and thus embarrassing the Vatican in the face of objections from the Arab world) which dashed Bea's hopes in June 1962. But that is less then a half-truth. The fact is that the CPC acted as it did for quite different reasons. For several months pressure had been building up. From April through June, Bea's proposals were attacked and harassed by conservatives not only as unwise politically and diplomatically; they were also stigmatized as "going against the fundamental dogma of the Church's exclusive and unique possession of the revealed truths."* At the same time, Cairo and the other Arab governments were being heard from. Diplomatic channels in Rome reiterated their objections; restrictive measures were threatened against Churchmen in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq; the Permanent Arab Information Office in Cairo announced a future meeting of the Arab League to discuss the question of why Jews should be mentioned in the Ecumenical Council; Nasser and his agents tried to organize a meeting of Catholic Oriental prelates in Jordan to protest against all of Bea's proposals.

With the entire progress of his Council in danger, John had no alternative but to yield to these pressures. By the time the CPC met in June for its final preparatory discussions, the decision to shelve Bea's proposals had already been taken. Thus it was that the first session of the Council passed without any mention of the document on the Jews. The session itself was a victory for John and for the whole prudent progressive movement.† And by the end of 1962, Bea and John had reached more definitive decisions concerning the document on the Jews. The greatly strengthened version they then planned to introduce at the second session began with a general introduction affirming the value of Judaism and denying that the Jews were a "cursed people" or that they were "to be blamed for the death of Christ." The death of Christ, it was asserted in this draft, "was not brought about by all the Jewish people then living and much less by the present Jewish people." The document then proceeded to condemn "the hatreds and persecutions inflicted on Jews in ancient times and in our time" as a special evil, even more objectionable to the Church than hatred and oppression of other groups.

From January of 1963 on, it was clear to everyone near John XXIII that he was dying. But this did nothing to diminish the attacks on his

*The quotation is from Cardinal Ruffini of Palermo.

†See *Letters from Vatican City* by the pseudonymous Xavier Rynne (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 289 pp., $3.95) and *Pope, Council, and World* by Robert Blair Kaiser (Macmillan, 266 pp., $4.95).

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ideas for the Council; nor did the clamor against Bea let up. Various rumors were circulated about him: his health was failing; he would have to retire; the Holy Office—supreme guardian over matters concerning faith and morals—had been watching him for suspicious doctrine; he no longer had the support and trust of the Pope; and so on. Even John himself was not spared: clerical pens in Spain described him as a tamperer with the faith of Christ's Church, and right-wing papers in Italy referred indirectly to his illness as the "hand of God." Tempers were frayed further by the appearance in February of Hochhuth's play, *The Deputy*, and Archbishop Giambattista Montini of Milan wrote an open letter to the *Tablet* in London dismissing the play as the work of "a very young man."

JOHN died on June 3 and Montini became Paul VI. At first the greatest harmony reigned between the new Pope and Cardinal Bea: according to authoritative reports, Paul gave Bea assurances that he was prepared to back his documents on religious liberty and on the Jewish question as clear illustrations of the Church's will to bridge the gap between it and other religions. (By this time, on the basis of a decision made while John was still alive, the document on the Jews had been incorporated into Bea's tract on ecumenism, and a part had been added in which preachers and teachers were admonished to be careful about how they spoke of Jews and the Gospel story.) The conservatives in Italy, Spain, and elsewhere were alarmed: the victory of *giovannismo* under John's successor seemed inevitable. The usual diplomatic activity started again, the usual representations from Cairo and the other Arab governments were made by their ambassadors in Rome. Oriental Churchmen were polled for their ideas and reactions; they responded that the document on the Jews would be a disaster. A long memorandum presented to Amleto Cardinal Cicognani (the Papal Secretary of State and also head of the Council Coordinating Committee) proposed that the document on the Jews either be amalgamated into a much larger document on all non-Christian religions or that it simply be removed from the agenda. On the specific point of deicide, the Egyptians let it be known that Jewish guilt for the death of Christ was as integral to the Koran as it was to the Gospels, and for the Church to deny that guilt would be tantamount to tampering with the faith of the Arabs. Paul answered one communication from Cairo coolly: "Nothing in this document, which is a purely religious one, can possibly be construed in a political manner."

The second session of the Council began on September 29, 1963. By November 1, after the conservatives had suffered a resounding defeat on the question of Church government,* excitement was mounting. The introduction of the document on the Jews was imminent, and messages to Rome spoke of equally imminent disorders in Arab countries, threatening the lives and property of Catholics. Oriental prelates were informed that they would not be welcomed back to their Arab homelands if the document was introduced, voted, and promulgated.

In spite of all this, the document was printed and distributed to the Council Fathers on November 8. This action unleashed the severest attack on Paul in private from the most influential members of his own government. The attack, it was subsequently learned, underlined the idea that the whole prudent progressive movement as headed by Bea and as outlined and exemplified in the Jewish and religious liberty documents was a danger to Paul's position as Pope and head of the Church. Bea's schema on religious liberty was nothing less than heretical; his schema on the Jews violated a Catholic tradition unbroken since the days of the Gospels; and his interference with the opinions of Council Bishops amounted to his being "a second pope." Furthermore, the introduction of the document on the Jews would jeopardize the success of Paul's proposed visit to the Holy Places in "Palestine," where he intended to meet the Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras, and lay the foundations of union between the Greek and the Roman Churches. Why not, then, put the whole thing off? It was now only the 9th of November. There were three more weeks to go to the end of the session. The Jewish and religious liberty documents were now chapters 4 and 5 in Bea's set of schemas on ecumenical relations. Why not propose to the Council Fathers that they first vote on the acceptability of the chapters 1-3—on relations with other Christians—and delay the vote of acceptability on the last two? Discussion of the three chapters could be prolonged until the end of the session quite easily, what with other Council business to be concluded. The last two chapters need never even come up for a vote of acceptability, much less for a final vote and for promulgation.

In the end Paul went along with this advice. The Council Fathers were told that they would vote first on chapters 1-3 *en bloc* and that "afterward" they would be allowed to vote on chapters 4 and 5. At first the discussion and vote of acceptability on 4 and 5 was promised for the last ten days of the month. Then it was stated that time would not permit the vote to be taken this session, but that solemn assurances would be given by the presiding Cardinal at the Council's last meeting that both chapters 4 and 5 would come up for discussion at the third session in the autumn of 1964. As expected, the presiding Cardinal (Agagianian) gave no such assurances at the last meeting. To calm any sense of disappointment, however,

*For exended descriptions of the second session in general, see *The Open Church* by Michael Novak (Macmillan, 370 pp., $6.50) and *The Second Session* by Xavier Rynne (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 390 pp., $4.95).

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Paul decided to turn aside from his pilgrimage to the Holy Places in Jordan and pass through Israel, a gesture calculated to imply a *de facto* recognition of the existence of the state.

THE NEXT STAGE in the development of the document on the Jews took place between January of 1964 and the following September when the third session of the Council opened. What happened at this stage must be seen against the background of Pope Paul's conception of how the Church should react to the world around it, and what he considers the essential conditions under which it can engage in a dialogue with that world. In his Encyclical Letter of August 6, 1964, the Pope set down his own distinctive viewpoint in unequivocal terms. The Church must look inward to refurbish its doctrine, to return to the purity of its practice and outlook, to revivify its self-awareness as the Church of Christ's salvation. It is surrounded, however, by a world in need of salvation, a world full of dark and sombre possibilities. The Church wishes to establish a dialogue with that world, but only along very definite lines. The Church must be ready to explain the privileged position it holds, the priceless deposit it carries, its exclusive possession of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In other words, the Catholic Church alone has the truth and any real "dialogue" consists in interpreting this truth to potential converts. For all men are destined to become Roman Catholics. The difference between the Pauline approach and the Johannine idea expressed in Bea's phrase "to see the truth lovingly" is obvious.

With the Jews and Judaism, as well as with other non-Christian religions, Paul envisages cooperation for "defending and promoting common ideals of religious liberty, human brotherhood, good culture, social welfare, and civil order." For the rest, with all due respect for "the moral values and spiritual values of the various non-Christian religions," Paul bluntly tells them that they have still to find religion in its "perfect and definitive form, free from all error," and hopes that all "may come to acknowledge the truth." Specifically speaking of the Jews, Paul refers to them as "faithful to the religion of the Old Testament" and as worthy of "our affection and respect." These are generous words, yet they also clearly betoken an affirmation of the view that the chief value and significance of Judaism lie in its having been the preparatory stage for Christianity. Here again we have the conversionist mentality.* And it is this note that was strengthened and made explicit in the new draft of the document on the Jews which came to be prepared between January and September of 1964.

Paul's pilgrimage to the Holy Land was marked by one short visit to Israel during which he made a point of defending Pius XII against the charges of Hochhuth. While in Israel he was also handed a report drawn up by Archbishop Hakim of Haifa which purported to show that a slow but deliberate process of de-Christianization had been initiated and was being maintained by the Israeli government. Subsequently, according to reliable sources, a special meeting of the Israeli Cabinet was held to discuss the report, but it was decided to do nothing for the moment either about it or Archbishop Hakim.

Once back in Rome, Paul directed that another form of the document on the Jews—one that neither the pro-Bea members of the Council, nor his opponents, nor interested Jewish bodies could approve—be substituted for the original text submitted to the Council by Bea on November 8, 1963. The purpose of this maneuver—a prime example of that peculiar combination of public relations naïveté and ecclesiastical sophistication which provoked Joseph de Maistre to describe the Vatican chancellery of his day as "endowed with the contradictory qualities of the simplicity of the serpent and the wisdom of the dove"—was to create a situation in which it would be virtually impossible for any final vote to be taken on any document on the Jews in the third session.

The first move was to get the document out of the hands of the SECU. To effect this, Paul gave orders that the SECU, in order to mollify Arab opposition, was to amplify the original document to include at least a mention of the Moslems and a general reference to all religious-minded people. And since the term "deicide" bothered the conservatives no end, it had to come out. Bea was thus presented with a dilemma. If he acceded to the request that the Moslems and other non-Christian religions be mentioned, the document would really cease to belong to the competence of the SECU, and would fall properly into the jurisdiction of the Secretariat for all non-Christian religions, headed by Cardinal Marella, a staunch conservative and opponent of Bea. On the other hand, if Bea refused to effect the proposed modifications, then it would be up to Cardinal Cicognani's Coordinating Committee (which must approve all Council documents and project-decrees) to see that "the Holy Father's will was carried out."

The SECU authorities, as expected, declined to make the necessary additions, pleading incompetence in Moslem religious matters. They did, however, delete the term "deicide," and at the end of April handed the document back to Cicognani's Coordinating Committee.

The next move was to restructure the text while making sure that no word of the changes would reach the outer world, above all the American clerical world. For since February all the American Cardinals, except Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles, had on different occasions publicly declared that the Council must pronounce on the Jewish question. Cardinal Cushing of Boston

*Cf. *The Pilgrim* by the pseudonymous Michael Serafian (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 281 pp., $4.50).

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stated that "this Jewish declaration is the touchstone of our sincerity." Cardinal Spellman of New York told a meeting of the American Jewish Committee that the deicide charge was absurd. Cardinals Meyer (Chicago) and Ritter (St. Louis), as well as other prominent members of the American hierarchy, also made their attitude quite clear: they expected the document on the Jews—meaning Bea's text of November 8, 1963—to be voted and promulgated in the forthcoming session of the Council.

Around the end of May, a new draft emerged from Cicognani's Coordinating Committee. It began by speaking of Judaism as the preparatory stage for Christianity, and went on to recommend that because Christians "have received their inheritance from the Jews," they should cultivate good relations with them. It condemned any maltreatment of the Jews (the word "persecution" was sidestepped) "just as the Church severely reproves wrongs inflicted upon men wheresoever." It declared that the conversion of the Jews "is part of the Christian hope" and that the Church "expects the entrance of the Jews" into Catholicism. *On this account,* the draft went on, Catholics must avoid denigrating Jews either in sermons, catechetical instruction, or daily conversations, and must also avoid imputing to the Jews of our time "what was perpetrated in the sufferings of Christ." The all-important words "cursed" and "deicide" did not appear.

The firm expression of the conversionist mentality, the reason given for avoiding denigration of Jews or attacking them for the death of Christ, the omission of any direct and explicit condemnation of anti-Semitism and its evils—all this rendered the new draft unacceptable. It would be unacceptable to the Jews (for whom it was intended as a bridge to better relations) because it made their continued existence and safety contingent on the disappearance of Judaism and only forbade denigration of them in view of this eventuality. It would be unacceptable to Bea and his supporters and the American hierarchy because it did not clearly repudiate the idea that the Jews were deicides and an accursed people. And like any other document on the Jews, it would be unacceptable to Cairo and to the Arab world. The revised text really did meet all the conservative exigencies of the moment.

At the beginning of June, news that some "changes" had been effected in the document on the Jews leaked out. No details, except the deletion of the term "deicide," were yet known, and inquiries at the SECU and elsewhere only brought forth the statement that the document had been "strengthened." The actual condition of the document was kept secret until the last days of August so that nothing effective could be done about it before the Council met for its third session on the 14th of September. And it was only through the offices of an interested American Churchman that the actual text of the new draft came, in late August, into the hands of the American press. Its publication evoked sharp protest on all sides —not least from Jewish spokesmen who had seen in the November 8 draft a major instrument for the eradication of anti-Semitism in the Western world, and who were stirred to ancient memories of forced conversion by the proselytizing theme in the revised text. The summer of 1964 was thus a difficult time for supporters of the document on the Jews, and the third session opened with its fate still highly uncertain.

However, other events in the Council from September 14 to 25 engendered as much euphoria in the majority of the Bishops participating as they did foreboding in the conservative minority of Council Fathers and the holders of power in the Vatican. The voting on progressive issues was massive: the Bishops declared themselves entitled by divine right to share in the government of the universal Church with the Pope (the doctrine of collegiality). They approved of lay deacons who might also be married. They refused to exaggerate the importance of the Virgin Mary in the total scheme of the Church. They were clearly for closer ties with other non-Christian bodies, even to the point of praying together and sharing intimate acts of worship with them. They demanded a bold enunciation of the principle of religious liberty and asserted that this principle was applicable to Catholic and Christian, non-Christian and atheist alike. They insisted that Schema 13, dealing with ticklish problems like contraception, birth-control, conscientious objection, disarmament, peace, and poverty be taken up at this session and not put off "until a further date." And they further made known their feeling that this session of the Council must not be the last. It is difficult for the non-Catholic to imagine the dismay that these developments created in the conservative mind.

It was at this moment in time and spirit that Bea took the podium (September 25) to present the new draft of the document on the Jews. The main point of his presentation was that neither the Jews of Christ's time nor of any other time could be accused of deicide; the historical and archaeological evidence was against such an interpretation of the Gospel story. He urged the Council to adopt the document, regardless of any political considerations.

A press conference given on the following day by Monsignor Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster, shed further light on the trouble and confusion that prevailed at that moment in progressive ranks over the revised text of the document on the Jews. The Archbishop admitted, astonishingly enough, that "I do not know why the wording was changed." More astonishing still, he said the "expression 'deicide' has always seemed to me personally rather odd." That "Jesus Christ was condemned to death by the Sanhedrin," he went

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on, "is a fact of history. In that sense it is correct to say that Jesus Christ was killed by the Jews." The Archbishop did, however, believe that "the Jewish people as such cannot be held guilty for the death of Christ." And in answer to questions at the end of the press conference he said that he himself was disposed to do all he could to satisfy the desires of his Jewish friends. Speaking on September 29, he humbly pleaded "that this declaration of ours shall openly proclaim that the Jewish people as such are not guilty of the death of Our Lord." To temporize or water down the original text, he said, would be a great mistake.

The debate on the revised text lasted two days, the 28th and the 29th of September. Cardinals Ritter, Meyer, König, and Lienart came out clearly in favor of a return to the original draft of the document. They also insisted, together with Bishops Elchinger, Mendez Arceo, and others, that the original repudiation of the charge of deicide against any generation of Jews be adopted by the Council. Cardinals Cushing, Lercaro, and Leger, Bishops Nierman, Daem, Jaeger, Pocock, O'Boyle, and others accepted the new draft, but agreed that an outright condemnation of the deicide charge, as well as of all persecutions and injustices committed against the Jews in the past and in the present, should be included.

Only two speakers touched on the conversionist issue in a courageous way. Bishop Leven of San Antonio, Texas urged that instead of expressing the hope of the Church that Jews would become Catholics, the text should contain "an expression of our eschatological hope that all men of every race and people, Jews and Gentiles, will be gathered together with God." (Leven was not authorized by the other American Bishops to make this suggestion in their name.) Archbishop O'Boyle of Washington came even nearer the bone: "There is a passage in which is expressed the concept of the ultimate joining together of Jews and Christians. This brings immediately to the minds of many Jews the memories of past persecutions, forced conversions, and forced rejection of their faith. This raises the prospect of proselytism in Jewish minds."

Conservative thinking on the Council floor was subtly represented by the intransigent Cardinal of Palermo, Ruffini. "It is clear that Christians love Jews," the Cardinal said, "for such is the law of Christians, but Jews should be exhorted to cease hating us and regarding us as contemptible animals." And echoing the anti-Semitic pamphlets that had been distributed in Rome during all three sessions of the Council and with which the Cardinal was so well acquainted, he said that "it it also well known that the international organization of Freemasonry which is so hostile to the Church, is supported and encouraged by the Jews."

Oriental prelates spoke firmly through the mouth of Ignatius Cardinal Tappouni, Syrian rite Patriarch of Antioch. In the name of Stephanos I Sidarouss of Alexandria, Maximos IV Saigh of Antioch, Paul II Cheikho of Babylon, and Ignatius Peter XVI Batanian of Cilicia, Tappouni stated bluntly: "If this document is insisted upon, the most serious difficulties for the hierarchy and the Roman Catholic faithful in many localities would arise. The Council would be accused in Arab countries of favoring specific political interests. I solemnly ask that this declaration on the Jews not be included among the acts of the Council. The declaration merely promotes political ends." "The Council should scrap this declaration," declared Bishop Joseph Tawil of Damascus, "we must not admit it." "We must not glorify Jews by such a declaration," pleaded Archbishop Sfeir of Lebanon, "we would only arouse Arab animosity and difficulties for bishops living in Arab lands." "There is the phenomenon of Zionism with all its ambitions," said Maximos IV Saigh, "which, no matter how much we may stress its strictly spiritual import, will make use of a conciliar document such as now proposed in order to further its own aims. At least that is what Arab nations think."

THE debate concluded, the document was sent back on September 29 to the SECU with over seventy suggestions for its emendation. Immediately, the machinery of opposition went into action. On September 30, Salah al din Bitar, Premier of Syria, announced quite frankly: "The Syrian Government regrets that the Jews have been permitted to raise this question at the moment when world Zionism and Israel are trying to mobilize Catholics against the Arabs and just when the Arabs are trying to interest the world in the Palestinian question." And he issued a warning: "The declaration on the Jews cannot be considered to be a purely religious matter." Charles Helou, President of Lebanon, got ten non-Roman Bishops from Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt to send a telegram to the Pope stating that the "Gospels teach clearly the Jewish crime of deicide. In this matter of the Jewish declaration we see clearly the intrigues of Zionist politics. We ask Your Holiness to be wise and to obviate all discussion on this question in your venerable Council." Cyril VI, Patriarch of the Orthodox Coptic Church in Egypt, under prodding from the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior, declared publicly: "The Coptic Church thinks that no Ecumenical Council can forget the responsibility of the Jews in the crucifixion of Jesus. I follow with great disquiet the attitude which the Ecumenical Council will take following on the call of Cardinal Bea."

Through the offices of Arab statesmen in Lebanon and Syria, the subject of the document was brought up privately at the Cairo conference of non-aligned nations which began on October 5. It was decided to avoid any public statement on the subject, but President Sukarno of Indonesia

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was asked to make representations to Paul during his visit to Rome later on in the month. Then again, on Saturday, October 3, Paul received Nasser's Plenipotentiary Ambassador, Mohammed el Tabui Mohammed, in private audience. And on the following day, a delegation of Oriental Roman prelates waited on Cardinal Cicognani, to whom they presented a memorandum destined ultimately for Paul VI, in which they reiterated all their objections based on fears for their own lives, for the lands and schools of the Church, and for the very freedom of the Church in her mission in Arab lands.

It must not, however, be imagined that it was the document on the Jews alone which was the object of conservative attack at this stage. Council pressure, the Curia felt, had mounted to an intolerable point. The pace of the Council, its decisions on Church government, its approval of the principles of religious liberty, the admission of lay people to the Council, the possibility of a fourth session in the spring of 1965, the demand that the Council be permitted to air its views on concrete problems like birth-control, disarmament, and peace (the famous Schema 13)—all this constituted an intolerable threat, of which the document on the Jews was only one element.

On Friday, October 9, Cardinal Bea received two letters, signed by Archbishop Pericle Felici, Secretary of the Council. One concerned the document on the Jews, the other the document on religious liberty. It had been decided, Felici said, to set up a mixed commission to rewrite the text on religious liberty; on the commission would sit Cardinal Browne, Bishop Marcel Lefebvre, and Father Aniceto Fernandez (three arch-enemies of religious liberty), together with the Pope's own favorite, Monsignor Colombo of Milan. The fate of the document on the Jews was to be different. Since the majority of the Council Fathers, progressive and conservative alike, had insisted on the Church's roots in Judaism, the portion of the document which dealt with that point would be inserted into the schema on the Church. In this way, the Church could avoid being accused of dealing in politics. As for the rejection of the accusations of deicide and accursedness against the Jews, these could be included in a condemnation of anti-Semitism which would ultimately appear in Schema 13.

The aim of these moves was apparently to prevent either the document on the Jews or the one on religious liberty from coming to a vote at this session of the Council. And Paul, it was rumored, was thinking of ending the third session with a proclamation that another session would be held in two or three years, "when the matters discussed in the Council would have matured in the mind and soul of the Church."

Reactions set in. A group of progressive Cardinals organized by Raul Silva Henriquez of Chile and counting among them Cardinals Ritter, Lercaro, Doepfner, König, Lienart, and Alfrink, met at the residence of Cardinal Frings of Cologne to draw up a memorandum for Paul. In it, they insisted that the document on the Jews and the one on religious liberty be returned to the Council, and they called on the Pope to redress the grave injustice done by the minority to several texts which had already been approved by avalanche majorities in the Council.

On October 12, Paul received President Sukarno of Indonesia who had unpleasant news for the Pope. If the document on the Jews was passed, all Vatican diplomatic missions in the Arab countries might be closed. Simultaneously, at a meeting of the Arab High Commission for Palestine, it was unanimously resolved to send a delegation to Paul to protest the efforts being made at the Council to force the Church into taking up a position in the Palestinian conflict in favor of the Jews.

On the 13th, Paul saw the fiery representative of the progressive Cardinals, Frings, who reportedly asked that the procedural rules of the Council be respected and that the Holy Father not make unilateral decisions in response to pressures emanating from the conservative bloc. Frings was assured that all these matters would be considered. At the same time—so it was later learned—Paul expressed to the Cologne Cardinal his inclination to go slowly and not to force on the powerful minority at the Vatican or on the relatively backward masses of Catholics in Italy, Spain, and elsewhere measures of law and methods of thought in Church matters which could, in his opinion, only result in a terrible confusion leading to a weakening of the faith.

That same day, at five o'clock in the afternoon, the conservatives, stimulated by Cardinal Ruffini, held a meeting under the presidency of Archbishop Geraldo de Proenca Sigaud of Diamantina, Brazil. They decided—in what turned out to be a major tactical blunder—to make every effort to prevent inclusion of the document on the Jews in the schema on the Church. The Pope could never, it was argued, allow a separate and isolated document on the Jews to be accepted by the Council. And if this document were incorporated into the schema on the Church, it could be protected.

On more than one point the new version of the document on the Jews which Bea's secretariat had prepared after the Council discussions held on the 28th and 29th of September was stronger than the November 8 draft. The tone was positive. The term "deicide" was included. The offensive passage concerning the conversion of the Jews in the Cicognani version was eliminated. Bea now went to see Paul and, according to authoritative sources, urged that the document be allowed to come to a vote before the end of the session without being split up or weakened in any way; such, he said, was the wish of the Council. The

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final vote (meaning ratification and promulgation) could be taken at the fourth session.

A few days later, the document was delivered to the Theological Commission for examination. In the meantime, exact copies of the new version made their way out of the SECU to conservative Cardinals, to the desk of the Egyptian ambassador, and ultimately to the Ministry of Guidance in Cairo. Caution was counseled, however; it was felt that the document would not make its way successfully either through the Theological Commission or the Coordinating Committee. But nothing happened to the new text in the Theological Commission, which refused to incorporate it into the schema on the Church. By Wednesday, October 21, it was back in the hands of the SECU, and from there it travelled to the Coordinating Committee. Apprehension arose in the conservative camp once more: things were going too well with the document, and the Coordinating Committee could not, theoretically, interfere with the actual text. True, it had dared do this in April-May but the result had been disastrous and there had been a subtle excoriation by Heenan on the Council floor ("I have no idea who are the theologians charged with drawing up this document . . . certainly they are not expert in this matter").

Cicognani, however—who was supposed to hand the document back to the SECU ready for printing and redistribution to the Council Fathers by Monday the 26th of October—once again started delaying tactics. Already by the 24th, he had heard of a proposed meeting under the aegis of the Ministry of Guidance in Cairo on the 27th of all Christian community leaders in order to protest against the document on the Jews. He wanted the memorandum these leaders would draw up to come to Paul's attention before it was too late. And the memorandum indeed turned out to be strong, playing on all of Paul's fears as head of the Church. How could the Pope, it asked, prefer to align himself and his Church with 10,000,000 Jews (the numbers were inaccurate) against 100,000,000 Arabs? Besides, any attempt to absolve the Jews from deicide was contrary to the teaching of Scripture. And lastly, this unholy washing of the "guilty one" was sure to cause a schism in the Church.

Cicognani urged these objections on the Pope. However, pressure was also coming from the Moderators of the Council; the insistence of the American Cardinals (except for McIntyre) was unrelenting; the very intensity of Arab opposition had made it politically impossible for the Pope to accede to their demands; and the summation of the Council debate on the document showed an overwhelming majority in favor of it. Cicognani was therefore overruled. The order for printing the new version went out.

Cicognani nevertheless held off the printing for eight more days—and with good reason. Once printed, the text could hardly be withheld from distribution. Once distributed, it could hardly be withheld from a preliminary vote by the Council. For what Bea had now produced was no longer merely a document on the Jews and we can no longer speak of it as such. Running to more than 1200 words and bearing the title, *The Relationship of the Church to the Non-Christian Religions,* it dealt with Hindus, Buddhists, and Moslems, as well as with Jews, and then concluded with a general disquisition on universal brotherhood and the evils of discrimination. There was no doubt that it would be acceptable to the great majority of the Council Fathers.

The Jewish part itself was clear on the basic issues. In round terms, it condemned the idea that the Jews as a people were or are deicides. It repudiated the idea that the Jews were cursed or rejected by God. It denounced hatred and persecution of Jews. It called on Christians to foster relations of mutual esteem and knowledge with Jews. It did not contain any expression of the proselytizing spirit which was present in the version submitted to the Council in September of 1964. And it spoke of Judaism as an intrinsically valid ethos and religious way of life today.

In drawing up this new text, it would seem that Bea was intent on doing something more than submerging his draft of November 8 in a document of wider ambit or placating Moslem, Hindu, or Buddhist sentiment. While he must have taken these considerations into account, he also must have calculated that such a document would be of prime value to Paul VI on his forthcoming visit to Bombay, and that Paul would immediately see this. Paul, however, continued to hesitate, and at this point, according to well-informed reports, Cicognani suggested the procedural maneuver of a split vote. The text fell naturally into three parts: Hindus and Buddhists; Moslems; and Jews. Why not have a separate vote on each part? The first two parts (Hindus and Buddhists; Moslems) would be sure to receive overwhelming majorities, while there would be dissension concerning the third (Jews). The third part might even be detached from the other two, leaving them to be approved *en bloc.* In addition, the whole text, as well as the religious liberty document (about which the Pope had so many misgivings as opening the door to indifferentism and as usable by the Italian Communists in persuading Catholics that they could vote Communist with a good conscience in the now imminent elections) would be distributed late, as late as four days before the end of the session.

In accordance with this plan, the document on religious liberty was distributed on the 17th, with the promise of a vote on the 19th, and Bea's new document on non-Christian religions was distributed on the 18th with a promise of a vote on the 20th. So confident were the conservative forces that neither document would come to a vote at

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all that Nasser's representative in Rome was reported to have said to some companions at a private party that his government and the Arab peoples had stopped worrying about "the premature adoption of the Zionist document."

On Thursday morning, the Council convened as usual in St. Peter's Basilica. After some preliminary business, Cardinal Tisserant arose to announce that no vote would be taken on the religious liberty document. The reason, he said, was that some 250 to 300 Bishops had expressed the wish that the vote be delayed. Over two-thousand pairs of eyes switched from Tisserant's red-bearded face to the downcast eyes of Archbishop Pericle Felici, Secretary of the Council, who had assured them on Tuesday and again on Wednesday that the vote would be taken. Cardinal Cicognani stirred uneasily in his seat. And then pandemonium—of a restricted kind, but pandemonium—broke loose. Bishops rose from their places, descended the aisles, and gathered in little knots. Cardinal Meyer of Chicago went to the table of the Council Presidents to argue with conservative Cardinals Siri and Ruffini, who were by now looking rather uncomfortable. He then joined Cardinal Ritter and others to discuss the matter. Bishop Frank Reh, Rector of the North American College in Rome, called for paper, and a petition was drawn up for the Pope. Cardinals Ritter, Meyer, and Leger left the hall to go straight to the Pope. The petition circulated feverishly among the agitated Bishops.

Paul was watching on his closed-circuit television screen closely. One of his secretaries reportedly heard him murmur apprehensively: *"Abbiamo delle guai; non hanno capito"* ("We have trouble; they have not understood"). The telephone rang on the table of Felici in the Council hall: would the Secretary please re-establish order and proceed with the day's work? Felici motioned Bishop de Smedt, one of the finest orators at the Council, to the podium to begin his report on the religious liberty document. De Smedt's speech—which included a cold factual account of the procedural maneuvers practiced in recent days to keep the document on religious liberty off the floor—was punctuated five times by applause that sometimes went on for minutes in defiance of all calls of order.

"C'era la bomba oggi" ("It was the day of the bomb"), remarked the valet of Cardinal Pizzardo to a Council theologian that afternoon. This was almost literally true. Bishop Reh's petition was eventually signed by over 1500 Council Fathers and brought to Paul's notice. But Paul's authority as Pope was at stake; he could not go back on his decision. Even when, at an evening meeting with his Cardinals, new requests were made that he allow the religious liberty vote to take place, he remained adamant. There would be no vote. And Tisserant rose on Friday to state in the name of the Holy Father that the vote was being put off until the fourth session.

None of Felici's attempts on Friday morning—the last voting day of the session—to introduce a relaxed atmosphere succeeded. He addressed the assembled Bishops as *Venerandi* ("Venerable") instead of his usual (and less reverential) *Amplissimi et Ornatissimi* ("Most illustrious and most noble"). He announced that the Holy Father had decided to confer a gold medal on each of the Bishops present, and that he was also going to confer twenty-six new powers on General Superiors. It was all to no purpose. The majority was disillusioned and disappointed; and the decision blocking the document on religious liberty had evoked an unpleasant response in many countries. The result was that even Cardinal Ruffini thought that a vote on Bea's document on non-Christian religions had now become necessary. The procedural maneuver of a split vote was abandoned, and Bea's entire text was introduced. After three years of struggle, then, a declaration on the Jews was finally permitted to reach the Council floor.

An overwhelming majority of the Council Fathers, roughly 89 per cent, declared in favor of it. This vote means that the Jewish part of the text is now an official document of the Council. Since it has not yet been promulgated, the possibility still exists that it may again be altered. But it cannot be discarded or left aside. In a truly historic act, one which may come to be seen as a major step in the process of Christian self-renewal in our time, the highest legislative and representative body of the Roman Catholic Church has unequivocally issued a statement that will be of immense value in uprooting anti-Semitism and destroying some of its main foundations.

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DAVID HALBERSTAM

GETTING THE STORY IN VIETNAM

In most underdeveloped countries the relationship between the American embassy and the American reporter is fairly simple and generally straightforward. A reporter arriving in, say, a country in Africa will go to see officials of the American mission almost immediately. From them he can count on hearing the local American position, but he can also count on getting a relatively detached, if limited, view of the local government, its relations with the U.S., with the Eastern bloc, and with its neighbors. For example, when I was in the Congo for the New York *Times* in 1961 and 1962, the line went something like this: Prime Minister Adoula is better than most people think and considering the kind of country this is, really better than you might expect. As for Tshombe, don't be fooled by his anti-Communist stand. He is an anti-Communist, but he is also following a policy which he hopes will turn the rest of the Congo over to the Communists, so that his Katanga secession will look even better to the West.

This was a sensible viewpoint; it was supported, among other things, by the fact that Tshombe's deputies were always voting with the radical left in the assembly in an attempt to topple the moderate government. But it was far from the whole story. The rest of the story was that the Americans wanted to minimize Tshombe's considerable charm and ability and to make him seem just another tribal leader in Katanga, when he actually had far broader support. Thus, when I wrote a long article on him for the Sunday *Times* magazine, the State Department sent a cable to the USIS man in Leopoldville complaining that I had been too sympathetic, and suggesting that I be talked into doing an equally sympathetic piece on Adoula.

But if the State Department often makes the mistake of thinking that New York *Times* reporters are *its* reporters, the relation between American ambassadors and American reporters in most underdeveloped countries is generally one of mutual respect; if anything, reporters—and New York *Times* reporters in particular—may be treated too well. The reporter constantly has to remind himself that an ambassador in a small country where there is no immediate crisis may regard him as the best way to break through State Department channels and get his problems to the White House for breakfast.

In Vietnam, however, relationships such as these simply did not exist. Some were later to claim that the difficulties which arose between the press and the American mission were the result of poor handling or inept news management. But in fact the conflict went much deeper. The job of the reporters in Vietnam was to report the news, whether or not the news was good for America. To the ambassadors and generals, on the other hand, it was crucial that the news be good, and they regarded any other interpretation as defeatist and irresponsible. For beginning in late 1961, when President Kennedy sent General Maxwell D. Taylor to Vietnam on a special mission to see what could be done to keep the country from falling to the Communists, the American commitment there underwent a radical change. From the position of a relatively cool backstage adviser—a position not too different from the one it holds in many other underdeveloped countries—the U.S. became actively involved. Over 16,000 American troops were sent in where there had only been about 600 advisers before, and American aid was boosted to one-and-a-half million dollars a day. Thus the Kennedy administration committed itself fully to Vietnam, placing the nation's prestige in Southeast Asia squarely into the hands of the Ngo family, and putting its own political future in jeopardy.

In effect, the Taylor mission argued that the war could be won, and could be won under the existing government—provided the Vietnamese military were retrained in new methods of counter-guerrilla warfare. Taylor's report recommended that helicopters and amphibious personnel carriers be given to the Vietnamese army to increase its mobility. The report also outlined programs designed to break through Diem's overly centralized and personalized government so that American aid might filter down to the peasants. Finally, Taylor suggested a series of political reforms: broadening the base of the government by taking in non-Ngo anti-Communist elements;

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making the national assembly more than a rubber stamp; easing some of the tight restrictions on the local press. Above all, Taylor said, the government had to interest itself in the welfare of the peasant, and to this end, Diem, who was not himself corrupt or unjust, must be persuaded to stop tolerating the corruption and injustice of local officials.

The U.S. administration and some of its representatives in the field believed that the Diem government's domestic policies could be changed by all-out American support and that the government could thereby also be led into instituting reforms it had been unwilling to make on its own. Ambassador Frederick Nolting, Jr. emphasized, however, that because of Diem's peculiar psychological makeup, only support which was full and enthusiastic could influence him. It was in line with this position that Vice-President Lyndon Johnson, when visiting Vietnam in the summer of 1961 as Kennedy's personal representative, praised Diem as an Asian Winston Churchill. When, on the plane out of Saigon, a reporter tried to talk to the Vice-President about Diem's faults, Johnson snapped, "Don't tell me about Diem. He's all we've got out there."

It is not surprising, then, that by 1962 the Americans were giving in to the Ngo family on virtually everything. Having failed to get reforms, American officials said that these reforms were being instituted; having failed to improve the demoralized state of the Vietnamese army, the Americans spoke of a new enthusiasm in the army; having failed to change the tactics of the military, they talked about bold new tactics which were allegedly driving the Communists back. For the essence of American policy was: *There is no place else to go.* Backing out of South Vietnam entirely would virtually turn Southeast Asia over to the Communists and could have disastrous repercussions in the next Presidential election. To extend the U.S. commitment would involve the country in another Korean war, and it was by no means certain that the American people were prepared to support such a war. Finding a new leader might be possible, but Diem and Nhu had allowed no national hero to emerge. Consequently, there seemed no alternative to the Taylor-Kennedy policy of helping the country to help itself—sending in advisers, helicopters, pilots, fighter bombers, and pilot-trainers—while stopping short of committing American combat troops to a war against Asians on Asian soil without atomic weapons.

Because a sensitive administration back home wanted to hear that this policy was succeeding, and because of the belief that if the Americans expressed enough enthusiasm Diem would come to trust them and be more receptive to their suggestions for reform, optimism about the situation in Vietnam became an essential element of American policy itself. Not only were members of the mission regularly optimistic in their reports and in their comments to the press, but visiting VIPs were deliberately used to make things look even better. Thus, a general or some other high official from Washington would arrive in Vietnam, spend one day in Saigon being briefed and meeting the Ngo family, and another day or two in the field touring selected strategic hamlets and units. Then at the airport on his way home he would hold a press conference in which he would declare that the war was being won, that the people were rallying to the government, and that he had been impressed by the determination of that great leader, President Diem.

But with the increase in American equipment and American participation, more American reporters also arrived, and they saw little reason to be optimistic. They were told of a new popular enthusiasm for the government; they heard the American officials talk of reforms; they would pick up their American papers and read stories from Washington about new experts on guerrilla war, about special Washington staffs on counter-insurgency, about books on the subject being rushed into print to inform the American public. Then they would go into the field and see the same tired old government tactics, the same hack political commanders in charge, the same waste of human resources.

I MYSELF arrived in Saigon in September of 1962—a time of singularly bad feeling. François Sully, the *Newsweek* correspondent and for seventeen years a resident of Indo-China, had just been ordered out by the government—or rather by Madame Nhu. Though at first the American authorities had referred to the expulsion as a misunderstanding which would soon be cleared up, it was obvious that there was no misunderstanding at all. As far as anyone could tell, Sully was being expelled because he had offended Madame Nhu in a *Newsweek* article: a quotation from her about the guerrillas—"The enemy has more drive"—had been used under a photo of her paramilitary girl's organization, a cadre which she called "my little darlings," and which drew better pay than the government soldiers in the field. Cables from *Newsweek*'s highest executives pointing out that Sully had nothing to do with writing captions, were of no avail.

The expulsion of a colleague is a serious business for reporters, and in this case the arbitrariness and malice of the decision made it worse. Since Sully's departure was followed shortly by that of Jim Robinson of NBC, and since we all soon began to receive personal warnings of various kinds from agents of the government, we knew that the threat of expulsion hung over all of us. This meant that each man had to censor himself to a certain extent and to decide whether a particular story was important enough to be worth the risk of expulsion. I, for example, tried to avoid stories that would upset the Ngo family without shedding light on the serious issues of the country.

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On the other hand, in the early spring of 1963, when the military situation was deteriorating in the Delta, and then in June when it became clear that the government lacked the capacity to handle the Buddhist crisis, I decided that it was necessary to take the risk of expulsion and to write very frankly about the events involved.

What was perhaps even more disturbing than Sully's expulsion itself was the reaction of the highest American officials to it; obviously they were not in the least unhappy to see him go. He was, as one of the highest political officers at the time told me, "just a *pied noir*"—a low life. He had caused trouble for the American mission by writing solely about negative aspects of the country, and adopting a doomsday attitude toward the war. From the very beginning, then, I could see that the relation between the American mission and the American press in Vietnam was quite different from that which existed anywhere else in the world. Although the embassy occasionally chided the Ngo government for its attacks on the press, such high officials as Ambassador Nolting, General Paul Donald Harkins, and the CIA chief John H. Richardson were basically more sympathetic to the government viewpoint. They felt we were inaccurate and biased; they thought the war was being won, and they longed for control over us. "The American commitment," said an official mission white paper prepared in January 1963 for General Earle Wheeler, Chief of Staff of the Army, and rewritten once by Nolting because it was not strong enough, "has been badly hampered by irresponsible, astigmatic and sensationalized reporting."

THE SOURCES of this conflict between the press and the American mission can be seen very clearly in a comparison of the personalities of Ambassador Nolting and my predecessor as *Times* correspondent in Vietnam, Homer Bigart. Nolting is a gracious and considerate Virginian, a former philosophy professor who went into diplomacy in World War II and has been a career diplomat ever since. He had never been in the Far East before being assigned to Saigon, and because of the pressure from Washington, he badly wanted to take what the Vietnamese government was telling him at face value. If he was shown a piece of paper saying that local officials were going to do something, he was satisfied that it would be done. Though he had held an important job in NATO, he had never been much involved with reporters before, and he had almost no understanding of the press. "You're always looking for the hole in the doughnut, Mr. Halberstam," he once said to me. An extremely hard worker, he was caught in an almost impossible situation: a wartime alliance in which he was bending over backward to alleviate his ally's suspicions, at a time when his every gesture simply convinced the very same ally to take America's continued support for granted. The net effect was of a mythical partnership, for the last thing in the world the Ngo family wanted was a partnership with anyone, particularly the U.S. Still, his position would have been more sympathetic if he had not fed the fire himself. He was reporting that the war was being won, and he was pressuring his subordinates to tell him only good news; to reassure Washington, he had to believe that American policy was more successful than it actually was.

Nolting's job was difficult, but it was made even more difficult by the almost psychotic preoccupation of Diem and his family with the Western press—the one element operating in Saigon other than the Vietcong they could not control. Diem resented any criticism of his family; and since his family was in fact his government, he became angry at a wide assortment of stories. Diem and the Nhus believed that the American press was Communist-infiltrated; paradoxically the Nhus also believed that some of the reporters were CIA agents, and part of a vast underground American conspiracy against them. Hence, for example, when the first Buddhist monk burned himself to death, Diem was convinced that the act had been staged and paid for by an American television team—despite the fact that there had not been a single television man on the scene.

Every time we wrote something Diem disliked he would accuse American officials of having deliberately leaked it to us. (Actually, the source was often one of his own supposedly loyal palace intimates.) Nolting did his best to keep us from finding out anything which reflected badly on the government, but the city was filled with dissident Americans and especially Vietnamese who talked freely; it is a national characteristic of the Vietnamese that they cannot keep a secret. But unlike Diem, who could control the Vietnamese press, Nolting could not get the American reporters "on the team."

The prototype of a non-team player is Homer Bigart. A highly experienced correspondent, winner of two Pulitzer prizes for foreign reporting, Bigart has great prestige among his colleagues. He is no scholar; if he reads books it is a well kept secret, and his facility in foreign languages can be gauged by the legend about him which has it that if a Frenchman were to offer him a cigarette, he would answer: "*Je ne* smoke *pas*." He is not one of the new breed of reporters—Yale or Harvard and a Nieman fellowship—but wherever he goes in the world he sheds light, writing simply, incisively, and informatively.

In Saigon, Bigart was fifty-five years old, and his stomach frequently bothered him. But in what was essentially a young man's assignment—a relentless, ruthless grind under tropical conditions—basic professional pride drove him on and he outworked every young reporter in town. The embassy officials who accused Sully of being a *pied noir*, and the rest of us of being too young, were obviously

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dazzled by Bigart's reputation and intimidated by his capacity to find out things they were trying to hide. Eventually they even tried to discredit his reporting by sly allusions to his age and health. When he left Vietnam there was a great sigh of relief from American officials on the scene.

As THE situation in Vietnam continued to deteriorate militarily and politically, the antagonism of the chiefs of the American mission toward American reporters grew. In the spring of 1963, the Buddhist protest began, and for four months the reporters—and Washington—watched with a sense of hopelessness Diem's inability to deal with the swelling religious-political protest. The mission's proud boasts that Diem could handle his population and that the embassy could influence the Ngo family were stripped naked during the four-month crisis. On August 21, the entire policy seemed to collapse: after months of promising U. S. officials that he would be conciliatory toward the Buddhists, Nhu—without informing the Americans—raided Vietnam's pagodas in a veritable blood bath. The embassy not only was caught cold and ignorant when it happened, but then was unable to tell who had led the raid and inaccurately blamed it on the military. Reporters, who had predicted that something of this nature was likely to happen, described the raid and identified the raider correctly. In a sense, this meant the end of the old policy, but it ironically unleashed a new wave of criticism against the reporters.

My own first experience of this new wave came in early September, when a friend sent me a column from the New York *Journal-American* in which I was accused of being soft on Communism and of preparing the way through my dispatches in the *Times* for a Vietnamese Fidel Castro. I showed the clipping to a friend in the embassy. "Well, I think you have to expect this sort of thing," he said. "There may be more." He was right; there was more. A few days later, Joseph Alsop, after a brief visit to Vietnam, attacked a group of "young crusaders" in the Saigon press corps who, he said, were generally accurate in their reporting but were responsible for the near-psychotic state of mind among the inhabitants of GiaLong Palace. Being criticized by Alsop is no small honor in this profession; those of us whom he called the "young crusaders" knew that our stock was rising. At the same time, having covered the complex evolution of the Buddhist crisis for four long months, and having spotted the Buddhists as an emerging political force long before the American embassy, we were amazed to see ourselves charged by another visiting reporter with not having understood the political implications of the crisis. And having covered the disintegration of the Delta for more than a year-and-a-half and gone on more than thirty missions in this area, some of us were equally amazed to see ourselves charged by Mr. Alsop with not having visited what he quaintly referred to as "the front."

Alsop was not our only critic. The Kennedy administration—embarrassed by what was beginning to look like a major foreign policy failure, and angered by its ineptitude in allowing the pagoda crackdown to take place, in not having diagnosed it correctly when it did take place, and in not having any answer when it finally did analyze the situation correctly—took to attacking our reporting as inaccurate, the work of a handful of emotional and inexperienced young men. In addition, the President's press secretary, Pierre Salinger, and other White House staff members more interested in their chief's political standing at home than in the status of the war in Vietnam, would knowingly inform White House reporters that we in Vietnam never went on operations.

At the Pentagon, in the higher reaches where the realities of the war rarely penetrated, the criticism was particularly vehement. Defense Department reporters were told by Major General Victor Krulak, the Pentagon's specialist on counter-insurgency, that he simply could not understand what was happening in Vietnam. Experienced correspondents such as the free-lancer Richard Tregaskis and Marguerite Higgins (then of the *Herald Tribune,* now of *Newsday*) were finding that the war was being won, while a bunch of inexperienced young reporters kept writing defeatist stories about the political side. When Maggie Higgins was in Saigon, General Krulak told a representative of *Time* magazine, young Halberstam met her at a bar and showed her a photo of some dead bodies; he asked her if she had ever seen dead bodies, and when she said yes, he burst into tears. Krulak took great delight in passing this story around—whether it was his or Miss Higgins's invention I will never know. In any case, the long knives were really out. "It's a damn good thing you never belonged to any left-wing groups or anything like that," a friend of mine high up in the State Department told me after I left Saigon, "because they were really looking for stuff like that."

On October 22, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, the new publisher of the *Times,* went by the White House to pay a courtesy call on the President of the United States. It was a time when, except for Vietnam, the administration was riding high and feeling very cocky: Kennedy was sure his 1964 opponent would be Goldwater and was confidently expecting a big victory. Almost the first question the President asked Mr. Sulzberger was what he thought of his young man in Saigon. Mr. Sulzberger answered that he thought I was doing fine. The President suggested that perhaps I was too close to the story, too involved (this is the most insidiously damaging thing that can be said about a reporter). No, Mr. Sulzberger answered, he did not think I was too involved. The President asked if perhaps Mr. Sulzberger had been thinking of transferring me to another assignment. No, said

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Mr. Sulzberger, the *Times* was quite satisfied with the present distribution of assignments. (At that particular point I was supposed to take a two-week breather, but the *Times* immediately cancelled my vacation.)

But the most curious attack of all on the Saigon press corps came from *Time* magazine. A dispute had long been simmering between *Time*'s editors in New York and its reporters in the field in Vietnam, a far sharper division than the usual one between field and office. The *Time* reporters in the field felt strongly that the magazine was giving too optimistic a view of the war. Periodically, Charles Mohr, *Time*'s chief correspondent in Southeast Asia (who had once been described by Henry Luce himself as "A reporter—and how!") would return to New York for conferences where he would argue for tougher coverage on Vietnam. But his editors, who had lunched with Secretary McNamara and other Pentagon officials and had seen the most secret of charts and the most secret of arrows, would explain patiently to him that he understood only a portion of "the big picture."

In April 1963, Richard M. Clurman, one of the foremost defenders of working reporters among *Time*'s executives, visited Saigon, met with some of the working reporters, talked with their sources, and interviewed Diem, Nhu, and Nolting. After that, matters improved somewhat, and during most of the Buddhist crisis Mohr was relatively pleased with what he was getting into the magazine. But then things took a turn for the worse again. In August 1963, a brilliant cover story he sent in on Madame Nhu was edited to underemphasize her destructive effect on the society, and several weeks later, a long and detailed piece he did on the Saigon press corps analyzing the root of the controversy and praising the work of the reporters was killed.

Finally, in early September, with Washington still searching for answers, Mohr was asked to do a roundup on the entire state of the war in Vietnam. He and his colleague, Mert Perry, put vast amounts of energy into the legwork, and the story he filed was the toughest written to that date by a resident correspondent. It began with this lead: "The war in Vietnam is being lost." Not everyone in Vietnam, Mohr noted, "would be willing to go so far at this point. But those men who know Vietnam best and have given the best of their energies and a portion of their souls to this program are suddenly becoming passionate on this subject." Washington, he continued, had asked all Saigon officials for detailed reports on what was happening, and it had given these officials a chance "to bare their souls. Much of what they write may be diluted by the time it reaches Washington. However, these men realize that they are in the middle of a first class major foreign policy crisis and that history will be a harsh judge. 'I am laying it on the line,' said one. 'Now is the time for the truth. There are no qualifications in what I write.' Another said: 'I am going on the record in black and white. The war will be lost in a year, but I gave myself some leeway and said three years.' Another said that his program in the countryside is 'dead.' One source said American military reporting in the country 'has been wrong and false—lies really. We are now paying the price.' "

This was strong stuff, and it left no doubt that American policy had failed. But it was not what the editors of *Time* magazine wanted to hear. Mohr's story was killed in New York, and an optimistic piece was printed instead bearing no relation to the copy he had filed, and assuring the world that "government troops are fighting better than ever." Since this was not what most sources—the New York *Times*, the AP, the UPI, *Newsweek*, CBS, NBC—were reporting at the time, an explanation was needed. Accordingly, Otto Fuerbringer, the managing editor of *Time*, summoned a writer into his office and (as Stanley Karnow, Mohr's predecessor as *Time* bureau chief in Southeast Asia put it in *Nieman Reports*) with "nothing but his own preconceptions to guide him, dictated the gist of an article for his magazine's Press Section." Karnow called the piece that finally appeared "a devastating compendium of bitter innuendoes and clever generalities, all blatantly impeaching American correspondents in Vietnam for distorting the news." The war, it hinted, was going better than one would gather from the small incestuous clique of reporters who sat around the Caravelle Bar in Saigon interviewing each other and never venturing forth to the countryside. It was a staggering piece, for it not only indicted all of us, but two of *Time*'s own men as well. The upshot was that they both resigned, Mohr eventually going to the *Times*, where he soon became the White House correspondent, and Perry to the Chicago *Daily News*.

No one becomes a reporter to make friends, but neither is it pleasant in a situation like the war in Vietnam to find yourself completely at odds with the views of the highest officials of your country. The pessimism of the Saigon press corps was of the most reluctant kind: many of us came to love Vietnam, we saw our friends dying all around us, and we would have liked nothing better than to believe that the war was going well and that it would eventually be won. But it was impossible for us to believe those things without denying the evidence of our own senses. The enemy was growing stronger day by day, and if nothing else we would have been prevented from sending tranquilizing stories to our papers by a vision of the day when the Vietcong walked into Saigon and *Time* righteously demanded to know where those naïve reporters were now who had been telling the world that all was going well with the war in Vietnam. And so we had no alternative but to report the truth in the hope that we might finally break through the optimism that prevailed so obstinately in high places in America.

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SOVIET ANTI-SEMITISM: AN EXCHANGE

The following exchange between BERTRAND RUSSELL *and* ARON VERGELIS, *the editor of the Yiddish-language Soviet magazine,* Sovietish heimland, *was initiated last spring by a letter to Lord Russell from a Russian Jew who wished him to intercede against the suppression of Jewish culture.*

Moscow, 20 May, 1964

Dear Mr. Russell:

The Jews of Russia have been very moved by your letters to N. S. Khrushchev concerning the discrimination against them in the trials dealing with economic crimes. But I must say that your advisers have led you to use your influence unwisely. I believe there was a certain tendentiousness in the evaluation of these trials. There was no need to use your name in this matter.

In our opinion, it is much more important that you ask world public opinion and the Soviet leaders to look into the problem of the forced assimilation of Jews that is taking place in the Soviet Union.

Although there are about three million Jews in the USSR, we do not have our own newspaper in Moscow, Kiev, Minsk, or the other population centers; there are no Jewish libraries; there are no schools or courses for those who wish to study the Jewish language; there are no clubs, theaters, or any other centers of cultural activity; there is no public organization that concerns itself with the welfare of the Jewish population.

We find to our deep regret that it is impossible as well as fruitless to place this problem before the Soviet government or any other responsible organization.

We want nothing more than the rights given to the Jews of Poland, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia.

We ask you and other influential people to write to Premier Khrushchev and request him to solve this problem. It is urgent.

With respect.

(Signature withheld)

Please address all questions concerning our letter to the Jewish journal, *Sovietish heimland,* Moscow Center, Kirov Street. This letter was written on behalf of a great number of people by a war veteran who is an invalid of the war, the father of several children, the bearer of several war medals, and a member of the Communist Party.

* * *

22 July, 1964

The Editor,
Sovietish heimland

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you to make known the feelings of several Soviet citizens, including members of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, who have addressed letters to me recently. These Soviet citizens wish to enjoy the right to a full cultural life in the Soviet Union. They are Jews and they feel that they are denied the means of living a complete and satisfying life in the Soviet Union because they are denied the cultural facilities made available to all other national and minority groups in the USSR. I consider this an important and an urgent problem and I should be glad if you would kindly publish the letter I enclose, as well as my own letter.

I write because I am concerned for justice and for the good name of the Soviet Union. Unless people who are concerned for both raise their voices, the cause of peaceful coexistence and the pursuit of peace and general understanding between peoples and nations will be harmed by silence.

Yours sincerely,
Bertrand Russell

* * *

Dear Mr. Russell:

My colleagues and I on the editorial board of *Sovietish heimland* have read your letter very carefully. We greatly regret that we must tell you openly that only total ignorance of Soviet Jewish affairs and cultural life can account for the fact that a person as experienced as you are in public affairs could have allowed yourself to be involved in a campaign based not on facts but on unfounded accusations.

You sent us a copy of a letter you received from an anonymous writer in the Soviet Union. This anonymous correspondent suggests arguments for your intervention on behalf of Soviet Jews, who are supposedly discriminated against. You ask us to publish the letter, with the assurance that this will serve peace and "general understanding between peoples and nations."

But Mr. Russell, wouldn't the publication of an irresponsible letter serve aims contrary to those you mention?

Please bear in mind that the anonymous letter criticizes those who earlier counseled you to base your intercession for Soviet Jewry on the so-called "economic crimes" that are allegedly being attributed to persons of the Jewish nationality in the

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Soviet Union. The anonymous writer admits the tendentious character of the clamor raised in the West about the various Soviet trials involving economic crimes; and he urges you to take up another issue, that of culture. As you can see, the "defenders" of Soviet Jewry are not consistent, or, baldly stated, they opportunistically supply the uninformed person with the "argument" they think has not yet lost its demagogic power.

However, if one objectively considers the development of Jewish culture, I doubt that it can continue to be exploited for political purposes. How, for instance, can you explain the fact that in England there is not one Yiddish school, not one Yiddish newspaper, no Yiddish theater, no variety artists who appear in Yiddish, no Yiddish literary journal, no Yiddish books or translations from the Yiddish, no composers or artists who deal with Jewish themes?

I might be mistaken, but I don't think I have ever heard you express anxiety about this matter. But I have heard, on the other hand, that your compatriots claim that the Jews of London or Manchester are, as a rule, assimilated and that therefore there is simply no need for special Jewish cultural institutions in your country.

This may well be true. But one wonders why you deliberately ignore the obvious and natural fact that here in Moscow, in Kiev, in the Urals, in Leningrad, the Jews take less of an interest in Jewish culture than they did in the 1920's and 1930's and that it is impossible today to artificially expand the scope of cultural work done in Yiddish. How can one talk of satisfying "the cultural needs of the Jewish population" in isolation from their *actual* needs?

The fact of the matter is that the *actual* needs of Soviet Jewry with respect to Jewish culture *are being satisfied.* It is common knowledge that the main elements of Jewish culture have traditionally evolved chiefly through literature and through the works of painters, composers, and artists who cherish and preserve their bonds with their national environment. Study the facts, Mr. Russell, to satisfy yourself that these elements of Jewish culture are developing with sufficient intensity in the USSR.

At the same time, we are not advocates of what is called "cultural autonomy." On this point you will find many relevant passages in the work of V. I. Lenin, who more than once found it necessary to demonstrate the hollowness of this theory put forward by the Jewish nationalist party, the "Bund," which went bankrupt at the turn of this century.

Here in the land of socialism, libraries and clubs are not built on the national principle. We have no "pure" Ukrainian or Bielorussian libraries and clubs. And there are also no "pure" Jewish ones. Moscow's Lenin Library has some 70,000 Jewish books on its shelves. The Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library in Leningrad has about 40,000, etc. The Jewish workers are fully equal members in all Soviet clubs, so that Jewish concerts, plays, and literary soirées can be arranged in any club and palace of culture. As for literary activity in Yiddish, I would like you to name one other country where literary people writing in Yiddish enjoy such conditions for fruitful and creative work as in the USSR, where editions of Yiddish books and periodicals run as high as 30,000, where books by Jewish authors are systematically translated into other languages, where Jewish writers participate with full equality in all of the country's literary organizations and institutions. Incidentally, let me inform you that, as I write these lines, the editorial board of *Sovietish heimland* is engaged in a great and important project: we are preparing to change from a bi-monthly to a monthly publication with the new year.

But, speaking frankly, Mr. Russell, this is not the main point. Nor, of course, is the heart of the matter the "cultural autonomy" within which anonymous letter-writers wish to imprison us. The main point is that socialism has produced in the USSR a new type of Jew, one who is a full and equal member of the great, friendly workers' collective. What astonishes me is that after the definitive answer you recently received on this question from the Prime Minister, N. S. Khrushchev, the same question is again being raised.

Mr. Russell, surely you must know that all of these "questions" being raised by tendentious propaganda are nothing but cold war positions which certain circles consider to be advantageous at the moment. Were you to become more familiar with the life of the Jews in the Soviet Union, I am certain that you would refuse to allow your name to be exploited by people who operate on the "catch-the-thief" principle: in order to divert attention from the virulent racism and anti-Semitism in some countries across the water, they raise a hue and cry about the allegedly unsolved Jewish problem in the Soviet Union.

Respectfully,
Aron Vergelis*

* * *

29th October, 1964

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your reply to my letter of July 22, 1964. I note that this reply was published in the October, 1964, issue of your periodical, *Sovietish heimland.* You did not publish my own letter, or the copy I sent of a letter addressed to me by a Soviet Jew complaining that Jews in the USSR are exposed to forced assimilation and appealing for "nothing more" than the rights accorded to Jews in Poland, Rumania, and Czecho-

*This version of the Vergelis letter was translated from the Yiddish (as it appeared in the Sept.-Oct. 1964 issue of *Sovietish heimland*). The English version Vergelis sent to Lord Russell differs in some small details—Ed.

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slovakia. The reason you give for withholding this from your readers is that it is "irresponsible" and "anonymously written."

The letter was not anonymous. The decision to withhold the name of the writer was my own and was taken for reasons which you well understand. I should have been content to leave the question of "irresponsibility" to the judgment of your readers and I should have more confidence in the value of your reply if you had published my letter. Not only did you fail to publish the letter, but you misrepresented its content. The writer does not, as you allege, admit "the 'tendentious character' of the clamor raised in the West" around Soviet economic crimes. He states the opinion that public reaction to "the problem of forced assimilation" of Soviet Jews is much more important. In the long term, he is undoubtedly right, although the shooting of speculators and the singling out of Jewish offenders is properly abhorred by enlightened opinion.

Your reply is equally lacking in scruple when it dismisses as a "cold war" attitude, expressions of concern for Soviet Jews which exist in progressive, pro-Soviet, and also Communist circles in the West, and when it makes the ridiculous charge that the motive is the diversion of attention from "the racist and anti-Semitic orgy rife in some countries across the water." You cannot be unaware that the Communist Parties in Italy, France, United States, Canada, Scandinavia, Australia, and elsewhere have publicly criticized anti-Semitic literature in the USSR, discrimination against Jewish religion, and the depredation of Jewish culture. You are grossly misleading your readers if you suppress this important fact and misrepresent honest criticism of the inequality experienced by Soviet Jews. Your readers are surely able to judge for themselves the sincerity of your statement that it is an "obvious, natural fact" that Soviet Jews today "have less of a yearning for Jewish culture than in the 20's and 30's" and that "one canot artificially expand, without rhyme or reason, the scope of cultural work done in Yiddish." They will, I am sure, be as astonished as I am that you omit that during the personality cult of Stalin, Jewish culture and its leading exponents were assassinated; and that restitution has since been quite inadequate. This seems to many of us an unacceptable way of diminishing the yearning for Jewish culture.

Nor can one with knowledge of the true situation of Soviet Jews be impressed by what you say about the "fruitful" conditions available to Yiddish writers. Only five or six books in Yiddish have been published in the Soviet Union since 1948, not one by a living writer. I am fully informed of the cultural facilities that have been accorded to Soviet Jews since 1956. I welcome them as some mitigation of the crimes Stalin committed against the Jewish people, but they are meagre, grudging, and inadequate to the needs of a vigorous intellectual community of some three million Jews, of whom almost half-a-million speak the Yiddish language as a mother tongue. The striking cultural amenities supplied to even the smallest Soviet national and linguistic minorities illustrate injustice at present imposed on Soviet Jews.

You ask why I do not express anxiety about the unavailability of Jewish and Yiddish cultural institutions in Britain. *The Jewish Year Book for 1964*, published by the London *Jewish Chronicle*, lists hundreds of Jewish organizations of every kind, scores of libraries, museums, newspapers, and schools, manifold religious institutions, and a considerable selection of book titles on aspects of Jewish history, religion, sociology, politics, and philosophy. A number of the listed institutions have facilities in both the Hebrew and Yiddish languages. All this exists for a total Jewish population in Britain of 450,000, or rather less than the number of Soviet Jews whose mother tongue is Yiddish and about one-sixth of the entire Soviet Jewish community.

The Jews in Britain are clearly at liberty to decide for themselves if they wish to assimilate, what form that assimilation shall take and in what way they shall express their interests as Jews. If Jews in your country had a comparable choice, within the framework of Soviet society, or if they had opportunities equal to those of the other Soviet nationalities, outside interventions would be presumptuous. Unfortunately, they do not; authority imposes upon them conditions of assimilation in which they have virtually no choice but submission.

As the appointed editor of the only Jewish journal in the USSR, you are not an initiator of policy on Jewish matters but an authorized spokesman. The present moment, however, requires all of us to explain the need for an enlightened Jewish policy to the Soviet government. More than two years ago, as a sincere friend of your country and its policy of coexistence, I said that this situation would do much harm to the reputation of the Soviet Union. This, indeed, has proved true. It will be unfortunate for both the Soviet Union and the Jewish people if something is not quickly done to accord dignity and justice to Soviet Jews. Nor can this letter end without an expression of concern that little has been done to reunite survivors of Jewish families broken up by the war, and so to terminate their prolonged sufferings.

Yours faithfully,
Bertrand Russell

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MAURICE FRIEDBERG

THE STATE OF SOVIET JEWRY

According to a theory currently fashionable among Western Sovietologists, the abyss that separates the Soviet Union from the United States is gradually narrowing. It has even been suggested that we should speak of a gap rather than of an abyss, and that, if all goes well, the two societies will ultimately converge to the point where they will differ in little but ritualistic nomenclature: the one continuing to call itself "socialist," the other "capitalist."

Whatever the merits of this theory, it does not seem to hold for the Jews in the two countries. As time progresses, the Soviet Jewish community drifts further and further apart from the rest of world Jewry—so much so that at present it is the Western Jews, among all faiths, who can speak with most justification of their separated brethren and pray that this separation be only temporary.

Merely forty years ago, the Jewish community in the USSR was only superficially different from Jewish communities everywhere—whether in Poland, Hungary, Rumania; whether in the United States, Argentina, or Palestine. The *shtetl* culture, as American anthropologists have just recently discovered, transcended national frontiers. Until World War II most Soviet Jews still lived within the confines of the Czarist Pale of Settlement in the Western provinces of European Russia. Ignoring the official atheist propaganda, they continued to attend shabby synagogues led by aging rabbis or pious Jews past retirement age and equipped with brittle, yellow prayerbooks printed under the Czars. In spite of the much advertised campaigns for agricultural resettlement, including the abortive Birobidzhan experiment (which apparently tried to channel Zionist sentiments into an acceptable Soviet alternative), most of the Jews of Russia remained in their traditional occupations, except that the petty storekeepers of Czarist times entered the lower echelons of the state bureaucracy. To be sure, the Hebrew language was under a cloud, but so were the other languages of liturgy—Latin, Arabic, and even Old Church Slavonic. It is also true that Hebrew culture in general, which had experienced a rebirth in Russia shortly before the Revolution, was withering away. (The Habimah Theater, whose "godfather" was Stanislavsky, was only barely rescued by the intercession of Gorki and allowed to emigrate to Palestine.) But *Yiddish* culture did not suffer a similar fate: most of Russia's Jews continued to speak the language; there was a wide network of Yiddish schools; there were several Yiddish newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals; and there were a number of Yiddish theaters, including Mikhoel's famous Moscow ensemble.

By the eve of World War II, some of these cultural and religious institutions had disappeared. In part this was due to the natural processes of acculturation, and in part to the effort to hasten the assimilation of Jews into "supra-national" Soviet life. No Jewish institutions using the Russian language were permitted to take the place of the declining Yiddish institutions. Like other ethnic groups, the Jews were recognized only as a linguistic community; their religion was regarded as merely another variety of the "opiate of the masses" whose continued existence might temporarily have to be tolerated, but was in no way to be encouraged.

During World War II, Russian Jews were swept back into the mainstream of Jewish history by the German invasion. Having contributed their share of blood both to the Nazi holocaust and the Russian war effort, the remnant of Russian Jewry suffered yet another blow in the postwar period. Under Stalin's directives all Jewish institutions, including the wartime Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, were shut down and most of their leaders, including the faithful Stalinists among them, were killed. The victims of the infamous "anti-cosmopolitan" witch-hunts of the late 1940's were for the most part "assimilated" Jews who were prominent in Russian cultural life; in their hour of disgrace their Slavic pseudonyms were stripped from them and their shameful Semitic names revealed—a procedure, incidentally, followed by Soviet courts to this day. The Jewish community of the Soviet Union was terrified at the prospect of a show trial of a group of prominent doctors who

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were to be unmasked as agents of an American-Zionist conspiracy to murder Soviet leaders: the plot was allegedly masterminded by the Joint Distribution Committee, which was still very active in relief work in Eastern Europe, though not in the USSR. Only Stalin's death in 1953 saved these men—and perhaps the entire Soviet Jewish community—from execution or banishment to concentration camps. If the last seems extreme, it should be remembered that deportations of entire national groups were not unknown in Soviet Russia—it had already happened to the Kalmyks, the Chechens, the Ingushi, and the Volga Germans. Subsequently Stalin's successors freely admitted and duly denounced such acts as "violations of Socialist legality" of which they, high-ranking leaders under Stalin, had allegedly been completely unaware.

The events following Stalin's death revived hope among Russia's Jews and led to a bettering of their general situation. Together with the rest of the population, Soviet Jews today enjoy a considerably higher standard of living than they had a decade ago; moreover, police terror has been significantly relaxed and there is somewhat more personal freedom. The specifically *Jewish* hopes of the Soviet Jews, however, have not come true and they continue to be marked men in the society. Since the Soviet state and the average Soviet citizen regard the Jews as a "nationality" rather than as another religious group, it is useless for the individual Jew to abandon his faith or even to convert. He will still be marked as a Jew by his name or physical appearance, or, if these allow him to "pass," by his internal passport, which every Soviet citizen must produce —when applying for a job, or admission to a school, or a marriage license, or an apartment—and which states that he is a Jew "by nationality." Only children of mixed marriages have the option of choosing the "nationality" of either parent for their passport. There has been some talk of replacing this document with a labor card which would contain no information about the bearer's "nationality," but at present every Soviet citizen still consists, as did his forefathers in Imperial Russia, of "body, soul, and passport."

Numerous studies, moreover, point to a strong pattern of public anti-Jewish discrimination in the USSR. While a number of Jews can be found in various government bodies, including the Supreme Soviet—and even here they are seriously under-represented—it should be remembered that these are purely honorific assemblies. A recent article in *Political Affairs,* the intellectual journal of the American Communist party, pointed out that a large percentage of Soviet Jews are party members; it failed to mention that nominal membership in the party is virtually automatic in a variety of purely technical jobs, and that under Khrushchev no Jews at all were left in the party's *apparat,* which is the real seat of power. Similarly, only two or three Jews remain in the upper echelons of the armed forces—all of them survivors of pre-war years—and there are almost none in the diplomatic service, where Jews were once numerous. Jews are still very prominent in the artistic and technical intelligentsia, but most of them established their reputations many years ago. And if, as Soviet apologists like to point out, there are many Jews among the country's lawyers and doctors, it is also true that in the USSR these are poorly paid professions which entail little prestige and are dominated by women.

A recent study by Nicholas DeWitt, a leading authority on the Soviet labor force, indicates that there is marked discrimination against Jews in the admission policies of institutions of higher learning. DeWitt's findings are corroborated by the testimony of Western scholars and students who have returned from lengthy stays in the Soviet Union under the terms of cultural exchange agreements. Thus with both roads to advancement—the party and the university—closed to them, the younger generation of Soviet Jews now constitutes the one major exception to the pattern of upward social mobility in the Soviet Union. Indeed, the recent trials in which one-hundred-and-forty persons, most of them Jews, were sentenced to death for embezzlement, speculation in foreign currency, or black market activities point (among other things) to this loss of status. Many of the condemned were convicted of petty offenses, for which they would hardly have risked the death penalty had they not been spurred on by economic necessity or the lack of better opportunities. It is also worth noting that not a single one of their non-Jewish accomplices within the power structure—party bureaucrats, police officials, etc.—was punished with similar severity.

THE JEWS in the Soviet Union are the victims not only of "official" discrimination; periodically, there are outbreaks of "popular" anti-Semitism as well. Among the more recent were cases of blood-libel in Georgia and Uzbekistan, attacks on synagogues, and the distribution of anti-Semitic leaflets. As a rule these outbreaks are not reported in the Soviet press, which, however, never fails to inform its readers of anti-Semitic incidents in the West such as the practice of defacing synagogues with swastikas that broke out several years ago, or the activities of the American Nazi Party, which are presented as evidence of the resurgence of fascism. One of the principal grievances of the Soviet Jews during the Khrushchev era was that the government, while officially professing its abhorrence of "popular" anti-Semitism, did nothing to combat it—unlike Lenin's government in the 1920's—although the need for such a campaign was greater than ever. Instead there was the campaign against economic

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offenses, which tended to revive and reinforce the traditional negative image of the Jew. Moreover, while Jewish first names and patronymics are stressed in stories about embezzlers, thieves, and black marketeers, there appears to be a conspiracy of silence about positive Jewish contributions to Russian life. In the recent florid obituaries of the writer Emmanuil Kazakevich, not a word was said about his long career as a Yiddish writer. In the trial this year of the young Jewish poet Iosif Brodsky, who was convicted of the crime of "parasitism" and sentenced to a term of forced labor in the North, the judge repeatedly ridiculed the defendant and two Jewish witnesses, whose Russified patronymics were "corrected" to the Jewish ones appearing on their passports. Khrushchev himself occasionally set the example in Jew-baiting. In a speech last year to Soviet intellectuals, for instance, he digressed from the main subject of his talk to remind his audience that before 1917 various Jewish organizations had collaborated with the Czarist secret police. On the other hand, when Khrushchev said, in reply to a foreigner's query, that Russia's Jews had played a leading role in Soviet space research, his remarks were deleted from the text of the speech that appeared in the Soviet press.

In his highly informative article in *Foreign Affairs** Moshe Decter adds to the gloomy picture of life in the Soviet Union. The Jews, who have been living in Russia for centuries, are still treated as aliens ("we had to make room for *our* intelligentsia," Khrushchev once declared in an effort to explain why Jews have been removed from important positions). Though considered a foreign and therefore suspect element in Soviet society, they are not permitted to leave the country, a choice many of them would make if they could. As a people they are identified with Judaism, a hostile ideology, and both in turn are identified with the State of Israel, an "imperialist puppet." No other ethnic group in the Soviet Union bears such a stigma: the Lithuanians, for example, are not identified with Roman Catholicism and, by extension, with the "reactionary" policies of the Vatican, nor are the Turkic Moslems held accountable for the policies of Saudi Arabia.

DESPITE the fact that Jews are officially recognized as a religious group, they are not permitted to set up any central coordinating body similar to those of the various Christian denominations, the Moslems, and the Buddhists; nor do the Jews have any religious publications like the Russian Orthodox *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii* or the Baptist *Bratskii* vestnik ("Fraternal Herald"). Of all the religious groups, only the Jews are prevented from establishing contact with their co-religionists in other countries (the Russian Orthodox Church is now a member of the World Council of Churches, and Soviet seminarians attend Protestant and Moslem institutions of learning abroad); nor are they allowed to organize pilgrimages to holy places abroad (Soviet Moslems, even if only a few, travel annually to Mecca), or to manufacture or import religious objects (Christian churches are permitted to manufacture candles and print Bibles and hymnals, and the Moslems were recently allowed to reprint the Koran in Arabic). When attempts were made to bake and distribute *matzot* privately, a few old men were sent to prison as speculators. While charges of corruption are frequently leveled against the clergy of other faiths, only Jewish synagogues have been branded as centers of anti-state economic activity, like black marketeering, and even of subversive political activity, like meeting Israeli diplomats and supplying them with "slanderous information" about the Soviet Union (presumably a reference to complaints about material hardships and anti-Semitism). To prevent such contacts, a partition has been erected in Moscow's central synagogue, and foreigners are normally allowed only within the enclosed area. Finally, there is no public Jewish religious instruction at all, though we may assume that some parents attempt to teach their own children at home. The training of religious functionaries is limited to a single yeshiva, housed in the Moscow synagogue, which leads a precarious existence; only five students are presently in attendance, and several out-of-town students have been refused Moscow residence permits.

The Yiddish writers shot under Stalin were posthumously "rehabilitated," though not as a group and without any publicity. Jewish cultural life has not been restored, as have the cultural institutions of the Caucasian nationalities, the Kalmyks, and the Volga Germans, which were suppressed when these ethnic groups were accused of collaborating with the Nazis. A decade after Stalin's death, there is still no permanent Yiddish theater but only occasional Yiddish variety shows by surviving artists of the disbanded theaters. Though generally not very distinguished, these shows are attended by thousands of Jews, including young people whose knowledge of Yiddish is very slight. Yiddish publishing is limited to the bi-monthly journal *Sovietish heimland* and to the small tri-weekly local newspaper *Birobidzhaner shtern* which is published in the Far East and which, incidentally, accepts no outside subscriptions. The total ouput of Yiddish books for the entire post-Stalin period amounts to fewer than ten titles, mostly classics.

The familiar Soviet excuses for this state of affairs are unconvincing. It is, for instance, untrue that not enough Jews know Yiddish to warrant a state-supported cultural program for them. Ethnic groups far smaller than Russia's Yiddish-speaking community are provided with

* "Status of Jews in the Soviet Union," Jan. '63.

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hundreds of book titles annually and have their own theaters and periodicals. According to the official Soviet census of 1959, there are almost two-and-a-half million Jews in the Soviet Union and of these some 20 per cent—approximately half a million people—claim Yiddish as their mother tongue. It is also evident that the census figures definitely understate the size of both categories. Considering the intensity of semi-official and popular anti-Semitism, there can be no doubt that some Jews attempted to register as non-Jews, particularly in view of the fact that for the first time in the history of the Soviet census no passports were required as evidence and all answers were accepted on faith. As for the Yiddish-speaking group, a Soviet Jewish author writing in a Warsaw Yiddish journal pointed out that many respondents must have given Russian instead of Yiddish as their mother tongue because they "misunderstood" the question of the census-takers. Besides, the number of speakers of any language always far exceeds the number of those who consider it their mother tongue.

Nor is there any foundation to the Soviet claim that the support of Yiddish cultural institutions would be impractical because of the geographic dispersion of the Jews. Minorities such as the Poles and the Germans are also scattered throughout the Soviet Union, yet they have at their disposal various cultural facilities through which they can perpetuate their language.

The absence of any Jewish schools—even in the "Jewish Autonomous Province" of Birobidzhan with its 14,000 Jews—is, of course, the most blatant manifestation of the effort to destroy the cultural life of Soviet Jewry. While still publishing *Sovietish heimland* for the older generation of Jews, the Soviet authorities are seeing to it that Soviet Jewish children will no longer be able to read that periodical. A year ago a Hebrew-Russian dictionary was published but, as far as can be ascertained, Hebrew is taught only in *Christian* theological academies. Several university libraries have impressive collections of Judaica, but not one Soviet university offers a course in Yiddish or Hebrew or in Jewish history, except as part of abstruse programs in philology or archaeology which are open only to advanced students. A number of Russian translations from the Yiddish (Sholem Aleichem, Peretz, Mendele, and several volumes by the authors who were executed under Stalin) have appeared, to be sure, as well as an anthology of Israeli poetry, mostly by Communist authors, including Israeli Arabs. But the only "scholarly" books dealing with Jewish subjects have been a slim biography of Sholem Aleichem and some crudely propagandistic tracts, officially described as "scientifically atheist," of which the now notorious *Judaism Without Embellishment,* with its Nazi-like anti-Semitic cartoons, is a horrible example.

While Stalin was alive the Communist world was more or less politically homogeneous, at least in its official dogma and goals. However, the Stalinist policies toward the Jewish minorities did not prevail in the newly established Communist regimes of Eastern Europe primarily because their leaders had more pressing problems to tackle. Today there are huge differences between the treatment of Jews in the Soviet Union and in the satellite countries. In the countries of Eastern Europe, tolerance of Jewish communal life appears reasonably secure and permanent—provided, of course, that it does not conflict with the larger aims and policies of the states involved. The degree of tolerance in a given country appears to relate directly to the strength of "liberalizing" influences in its general political climate. Thus, the two most "liberal" countries, Hungary and Poland—which may soon be joined by Rumania—also boast the most active Jewish communities. Hungary has a Central Board of Jewish Communities which is rigidly restricted in its activities but subsidized by the government, as well as a Jewish Theological Seminary, a kosher canteen, and several religious secondary schools. Poland, with a Jewish population of only thirty thousand, maintains a network of state-supported Yiddish day schools, a Yiddish newspaper, a scholarly historical journal, an active Yiddish publishing house, and, most significantly, a state-supported Yiddish theater. The existence of these institutions in satellite countries, along with a reasonably permissive attitude toward emigration, make the Soviet policy of continued suppression of Jewish communal life all the more flagrant, and those Communists—both inside the Soviet Union and in the Western European parties—who appeal for the restoration of Soviet Yiddish culture see it as another step in the struggle against the remnants of Stalinism in the Soviet Union.

SOMEWHAT paradoxically, Stalinists outside the Soviet Union have also seized on the issue of Russian anti-Semitism. Thus, *Hammer and Steel,* the publication of the pro-Chinese "Stalinist" faction of the U.S. Communists, has pointed to the mistreatment of the Jewish minority as a shameful example of Khrushchev's violation of Leninist nationality policies. Or again, only four days before Khrushchev's ouster from power, the New York *Morning Freiheit* printed an article by Samuel Rozin of the Soviet Novosti Press Agency, violently denying a report in a Peking newspaper to the effect that the USSR was setting up "concentration camps for Jews." Indeed, it would be surprising if the pro-Chinese Communist movements—and the Chinese Communist party itself—were not to exploit the issue of Soviet anti-Semitism again, since one of Peking's favorite themes is the Soviet Union's "great power chauvinism" and its mistreatment of racial and

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national minorities. It is likely, for example, that the issue will be used by Chinese propaganda in Black Africa, where the fierce Sino-Soviet competition for influence is rapidly gaining in momentum, and where accusations of racial discrimination are not to be dismissed lightly.

In the Soviet Union itself, opposition to the government's semi-official anti-Semitism is widespread among the liberal segments of the artistic intelligentsia, which, while numerically weak, are outspoken and influential. The poet Yevgenii Yevtushenko, author of "Babii Yar," is the best-known representative of this group. Among the others, the most vocal are the two grand old men of Soviet letters, Konstantin Paustovsky and Kornei Chukovsky; this group also includes persons of Jewish origin, such as Ilya Ehrenburg and the film director Mikhail Romm. Their protests often assume the apparently innocuous form of memoirs, whose loving and nostalgic pictures of Russia's Jewish communities and Yiddish cultural life during the early post-revolutionary years are left to make their own implicit point of contrast with present conditions. Or again, these reminiscences may include descriptions of pogroms in Czarist Russia: the identification of the anti-Semites with the hated police providing another tacit but telling comment.

In their condemnation of anti-Semitism these Soviet writers, young and old, are following the tradition of the humanistic intelligentsia of pre-revolutionary Russia—men like Korolenko, Leskov, Chekhov, Kuprin, and Gorki. It is noteworthy that those writings of this older generation which condemn Czarist anti-Semitism are suppressed in the Soviet Union, even though Korolenko, Leskov, and the others are claimed as "progressive" forerunners of contemporary Soviet thought, and even though their other works are widely disseminated. Be that as it may, the Soviet intellectuals of the 1960's continue to refer to the neo-Stalinist anti-Semites by such traditional names as *pogromshchiki* and *chernosotentsy* ("Black Hundreds").

If the intelligentsia tends to oppose the Soviet government's anti-Semitic policies, these policies are quite popular with other elements of the population. This split in public opinion helps to explain the frequent inconsistencies in the Soviet treatment of the Jews. At times of ideological flux and internal instability—and the Sino-Soviet conflict and the spectacular palace revolution in the Kremlin have made the present moment such a time—the various factions struggling for power are more likely to value the support of the intelligentsia, the "engineers of human souls" as Stalin allegedly once called them.

Nor should we minimize the importance of Western intercessions on behalf of the Soviet Jews. Among those who, at one time or another, have expressed their concern over the problem are Bertrand Russell, François Mauriac, Albert Schweitzer, Linus Pauling, the Dowager Queen Elizabeth of Belgium, Martin Luther King, and Bishop James Pike of California. Under Stalin, any foreign intervention was likely to have been totally useless, and possibly harmful, but under Khrushchev the pressure of foreign public opinion proved effective on more than one occasion; it was, for example, successful in shielding Pasternak from police reprisals. There are also indications that persistent Western protests against the treatment of Russia's Jews, if presented in firm but temperate language and coupled with concrete and reasonable demands, do occasionally produce tangible results. The publication of the bi-monthly *Sovietish heimland* (scheduled to become a monthly in 1965) was decided upon "in order to please our friends abroad," as the Soviet Minister of Culture candidly declared. The periodical has obvious shortcomings—an official organ of the Union of Soviet Writers, it parrots official party pronouncements and is marked for its particular zeal in defending the "Jewish policy" of the Soviet Union—but it is, after all, written in Yiddish and it does contain some material of Jewish interest. Second, there is strong reason to believe that the planned "show trials" of Jewish embezzlers and black marketeers—which would inevitably have unleashed a new anti-Semitic campaign—were called off because of fear of adverse Western reaction. Third, though anti-Judaic and anti-Zionist pamphlets continue to appear, their tone has become considerably milder after the world-wide protests evoked by the appearance of *Judaism Without Embellishment*. The book was subsequently condemned by the Ideological Commission of the Party's Central Committee as "crude and offensive" and allegedly withdrawn from circulation. Fourth, some time ago the Soviet press denounced Israeli diplomats in Moscow for distributing Jewish calendars, which are indispensable to observant Jews, but when the incident was reported in the West, together with the information that no Jewish religious calendars were published in the USSR, such calendars were printed in the fall of 1964 and placed on sale in the Moscow synagogue. Finally, Lord Russell's letters to Khrushchev put the Soviet authorities on the defensive and resulted in public disclosure of some facts and figures about "positive" Jewish participation in Soviet life and Jewish contributions to the Soviet war effort. For example, it was revealed that during the war over one hundred Jews had been awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, the equivalent of the Congressional Medal of Honor. Such facts and figures had been suppressed for two decades and might be of some value in combating anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

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Once made public, they can, of course, be quoted again.

SPECULATION about the personal attitude toward the Jews held by Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, Mikoyan, Suslov—or anyone else who may ultimately inherit Khrushchev's mantle—is premature if not altogether irrelevant. But there is every reason to believe that Churchill's advice, in 1953, to negotiate with Soviet leaders while a struggle for succession is in progress, is valid. Though no formal "negotiations" concerning the status of Russia's Jews are possible, Khrushchev's successors, preoccupied with far weightier matters, may prove responsive to foreign intercessions on behalf of the Jews, particularly since all the "errors" and "distortions" in the matter can now be blamed on Khrushchev.

Foreign intercessions are valuable not only because they may effect changes in Soviet policy. They are reported in the Soviet press, and while they are dismissed as either "naïve" and "misinformed" or as "provocationist" and "hostile," depending on their origin, Soviet Jews learn of them and thus no longer feel completely abandoned and friendless. Some criticism of the Soviet treatment of the Jews also appears in Western Communist newspapers, and these are available in the USSR (curiously, Yiddish Communist newspapers are not). In addition, there are occasional broadcasts of news items and cultural and religious programs of Jewish interest, such as those transmitted by the BBC, the Voice of America, Radio Liberty, and Kol Israel. All these may not result in an actual improvement of the position of the Soviet Jews, but their importance in helping to maintain the morale of Soviet Jewry should not be underestimated.

The plight of the Soviet Jews is a very serious one. They are isolated from the major Jewish centers abroad, including those within the Communist camp, and the various communities within the Soviet borders are even cut off from one another. They are deprived of educational facilities and are threatened with the deprivation of their ninety or so remaining synagogues, the only Jewish institutions still theoretically tolerated. In this isolation, their notion of the outside Jewish world becomes a prey to fantastic rumors which travel from one synagogue to another. Soviet Jews have a very foggy notion of Israel or of the Jews in America. In the era of Telstars and space exploration they still depend on occasional travelers from distant lands for news about their co-religionists.

Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the Soviet Jewish community will simply disappear. Recent visitors to the USSR all report that the thirst for information about Jews abroad, and particularly about Israel, is intense. On major religious holidays the few remaining synagogues are packed, and on Simchat Torah, one can see thousands of young people singing and dancing near synagogues (some 20,000 in Moscow in 1964)—a risky thing to do in the Soviet Union, where it is much safer to be secretly religious than openly observant. In general, there is a strong nostalgia for a necessarily ambiguous "Jewishness."

The Soviet Jewish community is a victim of discrimination and persecution. It may become impoverished economically and spiritually; it may grow ignorant of its cultural and religious heritage. Yet it cannont really "assimilate," because complete assimilation is possible only under conditions of tolerance. This situation, in which the Jews are neither allowed to be Jews nor to assimilate, produces pain and despair, but it also brings about, as a natural reaction, a feeling of revulsion toward the hostile Gentile world and a reversion to values once abandoned. It kindles a renewed interest in the Jewish heritage, and very often a feeling of strong ethnic identity. It is suggestive that not so many decades ago, similar conditions obtaining in Europe produced a generation of Jewish theologians and Zionist leaders.

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KENNETH M. STAMPP

THE TRAGIC LEGEND OF RECONSTRUCTION*

In much serious history, and in a durable popular legend, two American epochs—the Civil War and the reconstruction that followed—bear an odd relationship to one another. The Civil War, though admittedly a tragedy, is nevertheless often described as a glorious time of gallantry, noble self-sacrifice, and high idealism. Even historians who have considered the war "needless" and have condemned the politicians of the 1850's for blundering into it, once they passed the firing on Fort Sumter, have usually written with reverence about Civil War heroes—the martyred Lincoln, the Christlike Lee, the intrepid Stonewall Jackson, and many others in this galaxy of demigods.

Few, of course, are so innocent as not to know that the Civil War had its seamy side. One can hardly ignore the political opportunism, the graft and profiteering in the filling of war contracts, the military blundering and needless loss of lives, the horrors of army hospitals and prison camps, and the ugly depths as well as the nobility of human nature that the war exposed with a fine impartiality. These things cannot be ignored, but they can be, and frequently are, dismissed as something alien to the essence of the war years. What was real and fundamental was the idealism and the nobility of the two contending forces: the Yankees struggling to save the Union, dying to make men free; the Confederates fighting for great constitutional principles, defending their homes from invasion. Here, indeed, is one of the secrets of the spell the Civil War has cast: it involved high-minded Americans on both sides, and there was glory enough to go around. This, in fact, is the supreme synthesis of Civil War historiography and the great balm that has healed the nation's wounds: Yankees and Confederates alike fought bravely for what they believed to be just causes. There were few villains in the drama.

But when the historian reaches the year 1865, he must take leave of the war and turn to another epoch, reconstruction, when the task was, in Lincoln's words, "to bind up the nation's wounds" and "to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace." How, until recently, reconstruction was portrayed in both history and legend, how sharply it was believed to contrast with the years of the Civil War, is evident in the terms that were used to identify it. Various historians have called this phase of American history "The Tragic Era," "The Dreadful Decade," "The Age of Hate," and "The Blackout of Honest Government." Reconstruction represented the ultimate shame of the American people—as one historian phrased it, "the nadir of national disgrace." It was the epoch that most Americans wanted to forget.

Claude Bowers, who divided his time between politics and history, has been the chief disseminator of the traditional picture of reconstruction, for his book, *The Tragic Era,* published in 1929, has attracted more readers than any other dealing with this period. For Bowers reconstruction was a time of almost unrelieved sordidness in public and private life; whole regiments of villains march through his pages: the corrupt politicians who dominated the administration of Ulysses S. Grant; the crafty, scheming Northern carpetbaggers who invaded the South after the war for political and economic plunder; the degraded and depraved Southern scalawags who betrayed their own people and collaborated with the enemy; and the ignorant, barbarous, sensual Negroes who threatened to Africanize the South and destroy its Caucasian civilization.

Most of Bowers's key generalizations can be found in his preface. The years of reconstruction, he wrote, "were years of revolutionary turmoil, with the elemental passions predominant. . . . The prevailing note was one of tragedy. . . . Never have American public men in responsible positions, directing the destiny of the nation, been so brutal, hypocritical, and corrupt. The constitution was treated as a doormat on which politicians and army officers wiped their feet after wading in the muck. . . . The southern people literally were put to the torture . . . (by) rugged conspirators . . . (who) assumed the pose of philanthropists and patriots." The popularity of Bowers's book stems in part from the simplicity of his characters.

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None is etched in shades of gray; none is confronted with complex moral decisions. Like characters in a Victorian romance, the Republican leaders of the reconstruction era were evil through and through, and the helpless, innocent white men of the South were totally noble and pure.

IF BOWERS'S PROSE is more vivid and his anger more intense, his general interpretation of reconstruction is only a slight exaggeration of a point of view shared by most serious American historians from the late 19th century until very recently. Writing in the 1890's, James Ford Rhodes, author of a multi-volumed history of the United States since the Compromise of 1850, branded the Republican scheme of reconstruction as "repressive" and "uncivilized," one that "pandered to the ignorant negroes, the knavish white natives and the vulturous adventurers who flocked from the North." About the same time Professor John W. Burgess, of Columbia University, called reconstruction the "most soul-sickening spectacle that Americans had ever been called upon to behold." Early in the 20th century Professor William A. Dunning, also of Columbia University, and a group of talented graduate students wrote a series of monographs that presented a crushing indictment of the Republican reconstruction program in the South—a series that made a deep and lasting impression on American historians. In the 1930's, Professor James G. Randall, of the University of Illinois, still writing in the spirit of the Dunningites, described the reconstruction era "as a time of party abuse, of corruption, of vindictive bigotry." "To use a modern phrase," said Randall, "government under Radical Republican rule in the South had become a kind of 'racket.' " As late as 1947, Professor E. Merton Coulter, of the University of Georgia, reminded critics of the traditional interpretation that no "amount of revision can write away the grievous mistakes made in this abnormal period of American history." Thus, from Rhodes and Burgess and Dunning to Randall and Coulter the central emphasis of most historical writing about reconstruction has been upon sordid motives and human depravity. Somehow, during the summer of 1865, the nobility and idealism of the war years had died.

A synopsis of the Dunning School's version of reconstruction would run something like this: Abraham Lincoln, while the Civil War was still in progress, turned his thoughts to the great problem of reconciliation; and, "with malice toward none and charity for all," this gentle and compassionate man devised a plan that would restore the South to the Union with minimum humiliation and maximum speed. But there had already emerged in Congress a faction of radical Republicans, sometimes called Jacobins or Vindictives, who sought to defeat Lincoln's generous program. Motivated by hatred of the South, by selfish political ambitions, and by crass economic interests, the radicals tried to make the process of reconstruction as humiliating, as difficult, and as prolonged as they possibly could. Until Lincoln's tragic death, they poured their scorn upon him—and then used his coffin as a political stump to arouse the passions of the Northern electorate.

The second chapter of the Dunning version begins with Andrew Johnson's succession to the Presidency. Johnson, the old Jacksonian Unionist from Tennessee, took advantage of the adjournment of Congress to put Lincoln's mild plan of reconstruction into operation, and it was a striking success. In the summer and fall of 1865, Southerners organized loyal state governments, showed a willingness to deal fairly with their former slaves, and in general accepted the outcome of the Civil War in good faith. In December, when Congress assembled, President Johnson reported that the process of reconstruction was nearly completed and that the old Union had been restored. But the radicals unfortunately had their own sinister purposes: they repudiated the governments Johnson had established in the South, refused to seat Southern Senators and Representatives, and then directed their fury against the new President. After a year of bitter controversy and political stalemate, the radicals, resorting to shamefully demagogic tactics, won an overwhelming victory in the congressional elections of 1866.

Now, the third chapter and the final tragedy. Riding roughshod over Presidential vetoes and federal courts, the radicals put the South under military occupation, gave the ballot to Negroes, and formed new Southern state governments dominated by base and corrupt men, black and white. Not satisfied with reducing the South to political slavery and financial bankruptcy, the radicals even laid their obscene hands on the pure fabric of the federal Constitution. They impeached President Johnson and came within one vote of removing him from office, though they had no legal grounds for such action. Next, they elected Ulysses S. Grant President, and during his two administrations they indulged in such an orgy of corruption and so prostituted the civil service as to make Grantism an enduring symbol of political immorality.

The last chapter is the story of ultimate redemption. Decent Southern white Democrats, their patience exhausted, organized to drive the Negroes, carpetbaggers, and scalawags from power, peacefully if possible, forcefully if necessary. One by one the Southern states were redeemed, honesty and virtue triumphed, and the South's natural leaders returned to power. In the spring of 1877, the Tragic Era finally came to an end when President Hayes withdrew the federal troops from the South and restored home rule. But the legacy of radical reconstruction remained

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in the form of a solidly Democratic South and embittered relations between the races.

THIS POINT OF VIEW was rarely challenged until the 1930's, when a small group of revisionist historians began to give new life and a new direction to the study of reconstruction. The revisionists are a curious lot who sometimes quarrel with each other as much as they quarrel with the disciples of Dunning. At various times they have counted in their ranks Marxists of various degrees of orthodoxy, Negroes seeking historical vindication, skeptical white Southerners, and latter-day Northern abolitionists. But among them are numerous scholars who have the wisdom to know that the history of an age is seldom simple and clear-cut, seldom without its tragic aspects, seldom without its redeeming virtues.

Few revisionists would claim that the Dunning interpretation of reconstruction is a pure fabrication. They recognize the shabby aspects of this era: the corruption was real, the failures obvious, the tragedy undeniable. Grant is not their idea of a model President, nor are the Southern carpetbag governments worthy of their unqualified praise. They understand that the radical Republicans were not all selfless patriots and that Southern white men were not all Negro-hating rebels. In short, they have not turned history on its head, but rather, they recognize that much of what Dunning's disciples have said about reconstruction is true.

Revisionists, however, have discovered that the Dunningites overlooked a great deal, and they doubt that nobility and idealism suddenly died in 1865. They are neither surprised nor disillusioned to find that the Civil War, for all its nobility, revealed some of the ugliness of human nature as well. And they approach reconstruction with the confident expectation that here, too, every facet of human nature will be exposed. They are not satisfied with the two-dimensional characters that Dunning's disciples have painted.

What is perhaps most puzzling in the legend of reconstruction is the notion that the white people of the South were treated with unprecedented brutality, that their conquerors, in Bowers's colorful phrase, literally put them to the torture. How, in fact, *were* they treated after the failure of their rebellion against the authority of the federal government? The great mass of ordinary Southerners who voluntarily took up arms, or in other ways supported the Confederacy, were required simply to take an oath of allegiance to obtain pardon and to regain their right to vote and hold public office. But what of the Confederate leaders—the men who held high civil offices, often after resigning similar federal offices; the military leaders who had graduated from West Point and had resigned commissions in the United States Army to take commissions in the Confederate Army? Were there mass arrests, indictments for treason or conspiracy, trials and convictions, executions or imprisonments? Nothing of the sort. Officers of the Confederate Army were paroled and sent home with their men. After surrendering at Appomattox, General Lee bade farewell to his troops and rode home to live his remaining years undisturbed. Only one officer, a Captain Henry Wirtz, was arrested; and he was tried, convicted, and executed, not for treason or conspiracy, but for "war crimes." Wirtz's alleged offense, for which the evidence was rather flimsy, was the mistreatment of prisoners of war in the military prison at Andersonville, Georgia.

Of the Confederate civil officers, a handful were arrested at the close of the war, and there was talk for a time of trying a few for treason. But none, actually, was ever brought to trial, and all but Jefferson Davis were released within a few months. The former Confederate President was held in prison for nearly two years, but in 1867 he, too, was released. With a few exceptions, even the property of Confederate leaders was untouched, save, of course, for the emancipation of their slaves. Indeed, the only penalty imposed on most Confederate leaders was a temporary political disability provided in the Fourteenth Amendment. But in 1872 Congress pardoned all but a handful of Southerners; and soon former Confederate civil and military leaders were serving as state governors, as members of Congress, and even as Cabinet advisers of Presidents.

What, then, constituted the alleged brutality that white Southerners endured? First, the freeing of their slaves; second, the brief incarceration of a few Confederate leaders; third, a political disability imposed for a few years on most Confederate leaders; fourth, a relatively weak military occupation terminated in 1877; and, last, an attempt to extend the rights and privileges of citizenship to Southern Negroes. Mistakes there were in the implementation of these measures—some of them serious—but brutality almost none. In fact, it can be said that rarely in history have the participants in an unsuccessful rebellion endured penalties as mild as those Congress imposed upon the people of the South, and particularly upon their leaders. After four years of bitter struggle costing hundreds of thousands of lives, the generosity of the federal government's terms was quite remarkable.

If Northern brutality is a myth, the scandals of the Grant administration and the peculations of some of the Southern reconstruction governments are sordid facts. Yet even here the Dunningites are guilty of distortion by exaggeration, by a lack of perspective, by superficial analysis, and by overemphasis. They make corruption a central theme of their narratives, but they overlook constructive accomplishments. They give insufficient attention to the men who transcended the greed of an age when, to be sure, self-serving

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politicians and irresponsible entrepreneurs were all too plentiful. Among these men were the humanitarians who organized Freedmen's Aid Societies to help four million Southern Negroes make the difficult transition from slavery to freedom, and the missionaries and teachers who went into the South on slender budgets to build churches and schools for the freedmen. Under their auspices the Negroes first began to learn the responsibilities and obligations of freedom. Thus the training of Negroes for citizenship had its successful beginnings in the years of reconstruction.

In the 19th century most white Americans, North and South, had reservations about the Negro's potentialities—doubted that he had the innate intellectual capacity and moral fiber of the white man and assumed that after emancipation he would be relegated to an inferior caste. But some of the radical Republicans refused to believe that the Negroes were innately inferior and hoped passionately that they would confound their critics. The radicals then had little empirical evidence and no scientific evidence to support their belief—nothing, in fact, but faith. Their faith was derived mostly from their religion: all men, they said, are the sons of Adam and equal in the sight of God. And if Negroes are equal to white men in the sight of God, it is morally wrong for white men to withhold from Negroes the liberties and rights that white men enjoy. Here, surely, was a projection into the reconstruction era of the idealism of the abolitionist crusade and of the Civil War.

Radical idealism was in part responsible for two of the most momentous enactments of the reconstruction years: the Fourteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution which gave Negroes citizenship and promised them equal protection of the laws, and the Fifteenth Amendment which gave them the right to vote. The fact that these amendments could not have been adopted under any other circumstances, or at any other time, before or since, may suggest the crucial importance of the reconstruction era in American history. Indeed, without radical reconstruction, it would be impossible to this day for the federal government to protect Negroes from legal and political discrimination.

IF ALL OF this is true, or even part of it, why was the Dunning legend born, and why has it been so durable? Southerners, of course, have contributed much to the legend of reconstruction, but most Northerners have found the legend quite acceptable. Many of the historians who helped to create it were Northerners, among them James Ford Rhodes, William A. Dunning, Claude Bowers, and James G. Randall. Thus the legend cannot be explained simply in terms of a Southern literary or historiographical conspiracy, satisfying as the legend has been to most white Southerners. What we need to know is why it also satisfies Northerners—how it became part of the intellectual baggage of so many Northern historians. Why, in short, was there for so many years a kind of national, or inter-sectional, consensus that the Civil War was America's glory and reconstruction her disgrace?

The Civil War won its place in the hearts of the American people because, by the end of the 19th century, Northerners were willing to concede that Southerners had fought bravely for a cause that they believed to be just; while Southerners, with few exceptions, were willing to concede that the outcome of the war was probably best for all concerned. In an era of intense nationalism, both Northerners and Southerners agreed that the preservation of the federal Union was essential to the future power of the American people. Southerners could even say now that the abolition of slavery was one of the war's great blessings—not so much, they insisted, because slavery was an injustice to the Negroes but because it was a grievous burden upon the whites. By 1886, Henry W. Grady, the great Georgia editor and spokesman for a New South, could confess to a New York audience: "I am glad that the omniscient God held the balance of battle in His Almighty hand, and that human slavery was swept forever from American soil—the American Union saved from the wreck of war." Soon Union and Confederate veterans were holding joint reunions, exchanging anecdotes, and sharing their sentimental memories of those glorious war years. The Civil War thus took its position in the center of American folk mythology.

That the reconstruction era elicits neither pride nor sentimentality is due only in part to its moral delinquencies—remember, those of the Civil War years can be overlooked. It is also due to the white American's ambivalent attitude toward race and toward the steps that radical Republicans took to protect the Negroes. Southern white men accepted the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which abolished slavery, with a minimum of complaint, but they expected federal intervention to proceed no further than that. They assumed that the regulation of the freedmen would be left to the individual states; and clearly most of them intended to replace slavery with a caste system that would keep the Negroes perpetually subordinate to the whites. Negroes were to remain a dependent laboring class; they were to be governed by a separate code of laws; they were to play no active part in the South's political life; and they were to be segregated socially. When radical Republicans used federal power to interfere in these matters, the majority of Southern white men formed a resistance movement to fight the radical-dominated state governments until they were overthrown, after which Southern whites established a caste system in defiance of federal statutes and constitutional

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amendments. For many decades thereafter the federal government simply admitted defeat and acquiesced; but the South refused to forget or forgive those years of humiliation when Negroes came close to winning equality. In Southern mythology, then, reconstruction was a horrid nightmare.

As for the majority of Northern white men, it is hard to tell how deeply they were concerned about the welfare of the American Negro after the abolition of slavery. If one were to judge from the way they treated the small number of free Negroes who resided in the Northern states, one might conclude that they were, at best, indifferent to the problem—and that a considerable number of them shared the racial attitudes of the South and preferred to keep Negroes in a subordinate caste. For a time after the Civil War the radical Republicans, who were always a minority group, persuaded the Northern electorate that the ultimate purpose of Southern white men was to rob the North of the fruits of victory and to re-establish slavery and that federal intervention was therefore essential. In this manner radicals won approval of, or acquiescence in, their program to give civil rights and the ballot to Southern Negroes. Popular support for the radical program waned rapidly, however, and by the middle of the 1870's it had all but vanished. In 1875 a Republican politician confessed that Northern voters were tired of the "worn-out cry of 'southern outrages,'" and they wished that "the 'nigger,' the 'everlasting nigger' were in—Africa." As Northerners ceased to worry about the possibility of another Southern rebellion, they became increasingly receptive to criticism of radical reconstruction.

The eventual disintegration of the radical phalanx, those root-and-branch men who, for a time, seemed bent on engineering a sweeping reformation of Southern society, was another important reason for the denigration of reconstruction in American historiography. To be sure, some of the radicals, especially those who had been abolitionists before the war, never lost faith in the Negro, and in the years after reconstruction they stood by him as he struggled to break the intellectual and psychological fetters he had brought with him out of slavery. Other radicals, however, lost interest in the cause—tired of reform and spent their declining years writing their memoirs. Still others retained their crusading zeal but became disenchanted with radical reconstruction and found other crusades more attractive: civil service reform, or tariff reform, or defense of the gold standard. In 1872 they repudiated Grant and joined the Liberal Republicans; in subsequent years they considered themselves to be political independents.

This latter group had been an important element in the original radical coalition. Most of them were respectable, middle-class people in comfortable economic circumstances, well educated and highly articulate, and acutely conscious of their obligation to perform disinterested public service. They had looked upon Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts as their political spokesman, and upon Edwin L. Godkin of the New York *Nation* as their editorial spokesman. Like most radicals they had believed that the Negro was what slavery had made him; give the Negro equal rights and he would be quickly transformed into an industrious and responsible citizen. With the radical reconstruction program fairly launched, they had looked forward to swift and dramatic results.

BUT reconstruction was not as orderly and the Negro's progress was not nearly as swift and dramatic as these reformers had seemed to expect. The first signs of doubt came soon after the radicals won control of reconstruction policy, when the *Nation* warned the Negroes that the government had already done all it could for them. They were now, said the *Nation*, "on the dusty and rugged highway of competition"; henceforth "the removal of white prejudice against the Negro depends almost entirely on the Negro himself." By 1870 this bellwether of the reformers viewed with alarm the disorders and irregularities in the states governed by Negroes and carpetbaggers; by 1871 it proclaimed: "The experiment has totally failed. . . . We owe it to human nature to say that worse governments have seldom been seen in a civilized country." And three years later, looking at South Carolina, the *Nation* pronounced the ultimate epithet: "This is . . . socialism." Among the former radicals associated with the *Nation* in these years of tragic disillusionment were three prewar abolitionists: Edmund Quincy of Massachusetts, James Miller McKim of Pennsylvania, and the Reverend O. B. Frothingham of New York.

Finally, in 1890, many years after the reconstruction governments had collapsed, the *Nation*, still accurately reflecting the state of mind of the disenchanted reformers, made a full confession of its past errors. "There is," said the *Nation*, "a rapidly growing sympathy at the North with Southern perplexity over the negro problem. . . . Even those who were not shocked by the carpetbag experiment . . . are beginning to 'view with alarm' the political prospect created by the increase of the negro population, and by the continued inability of southern society to absorb or assimilate them in any sense, physical, social, or political. . . . The sudden admission to the suffrage of a million of the recently emancipated slaves belonging to the least civilized race in the world . . . was a great leap in the dark, the ultimate consequences of which no man now living can foresee. No nation has ever done this, or anything like this for the benefit of aliens of any race or creed. Who or what is . . . [the Negro]

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that we should put the interest of the 55,000,000 whites on this continent in peril for his sake?" Editor Godkin answered his own question in a letter to another one-time radical: "I do not see . . . how the negro is ever to be worked into a system of government for which you and I would have much respect."

ACTUALLY, neither the obvious shortcomings of reconstruction nor an objective view of the Negro's progress in the years after emancipation can wholly explain the disillusionment of so many former radicals. Rather, their changed attitude toward the Negro and the hostile historical interpretation of reconstruction that won their favor were in part the product of social trends that severely affected the old American middle classes with whom most of them were identified. These trends had their origin in the Industrial Revolution; they were evident in the early 19th century but were enormously accelerated after the Civil War. Their institutional symbols were the giant manufacturing and railroad corporations.

In the new age of industrial enterprise there seemed to be no place for the old families with their genteel culture and strong traditions of disinterested public service. On the one hand, they were overshadowed by new and powerful industrial capitalists whose economic strength brought with it vast political influence. Legislative bodies became arenas in which the political vassals of oil, steel, and railroad barons struggled for special favors, while the interests of the public—and the old middle classes liked to think of themselves as *the public*—counted for nothing. On the other hand, they were threatened by the immigrants who came to America to work in the mines and mills and on the railroads—Italians, Slavs, and Jews from Poland and Russia. The immigrants crowded into the tenements of eastern cities, responded to the friendly overtures of urban political bosses, and used their ballots to evict the old middle-class families from power. Here was a threat to the traditional America that these families had loved—and dominated; to that once vigorous American nationality that was Protestant, Anglo-Saxon, and pure. Henry James commented bitterly about the people he met on Boston Common during a stroll one Sunday afternoon: "No sound of English, in a single instance escaped their lips; the greater number spoke a rude form of Italian, the others some outland dialect unknown to me. . . . The types and faces bore them out; the people before me were gross aliens to a man, and they were in serene and triumphant possession."

Soon the new immigrant groups had become the victims of cruel racial stereotypes. Taken collectively it would appear that they were, among other things, innately inferior to the Anglo-Saxons in their intellectual and physical traits, dirty and immoral in their habits, inclined toward criminality, receptive to dangerous political beliefs, and shiftless and irresponsible.

In due time, those who repeated these stereotypes awoke to the realization that what they were saying was not really very original—that, as a matter of fact, these generalizations were *precisely* the ones that Southern white men had been making about Negroes for years. And, in their extremity, the old middle classes of the North looked with new understanding upon the problems of the beleaguered white men of the South. Perhaps all along Southerners had understood the problem better than they. Here, then, was a crucial part of the intellectual climate in which the Dunning interpretation of reconstruction was written. It was written at a time when xenophobia had become almost a national disease, when the immigration restriction movement was getting into high gear, when numerous Northern cities (among them Philadelphia and Chicago) were seriously considering the establishment of racially segregated schools, and when Negroes and immigrants were being lumped together in the category of unassimilable aliens.

Several other attitudes, prevalent in the late 19th century, encouraged an interpretation of reconstruction that condemned radical Republicans for meddling in Southern race relations. The vogue of social Darwinism discouraged governmental intervention in behalf of Negroes as well as other underprivileged groups; it encouraged the belief that a solution to the race problem could only evolve slowly as the Negroes gradually improved themselves. A rising spirit of nationalism stimulated a desire for sectional reconciliation, and part of the price was a virtual abdication of federal responsibility for the protection of the Negro's civil and political rights. An outburst of imperialism manifested in the Spanish-American War and the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands, found one of its principal justifications in the notion that Anglo-Saxons were superior to other peoples, especially when it came to politics. In the words of Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana: "God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic people for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-admiration. No! He has made us the master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns. . . . He has made us adepts in government that we may administer government among savages and senile peoples." What folly, then, to expect Italians and Slavs to behave like Anglo-Saxons—or to accept the sentimental doctrine that Negroes deserve to be given the same political rights as white men!

Finally, at this critical juncture, sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists presented what they regarded as convincing evidence of innate racial traits—evidence indicating that Negroes were intellectually inferior to whites and had distinctive emotional characteristics. The social

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scientists thus supplied the racists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries with something that ante-bellum pro-slavery writers had always lacked: a respectable scientific argument. When, in 1916, Madison Grant, an amateur cultural anthropologist, published *The Passing of the Great Race,* his racism was only a mild caricature of a point of view shared by numerous social scientists. Examining the history of the United States, Grant easily detected her tragic blunder:

> Race consciousness . . . in the United States, down to and including the Mexican War, seems to have been very strongly developed among native Americans, and it still remains in full vigor today in the South, where the presence of a large negro population forces this question upon the daily attention of the whites. . . . In New England, however . . . there appeared early in the last century a wave of sentimentalism, which at that time took up the cause of the negro, and in so doing apparently destroyed, to a large extent, pride and consciousness of race in the North. The agitation over slavery was inimical to the Nordic race, because it thrust aside all national opposition to the intrusion of hordes of immigrants of inferior racial value, and prevented the fixing of a definite American type. . . . The native American by the middle of the nineteenth century was rapidly becoming a distinct type. . . . The Civil War, however, put a severe, perhaps fatal, check to the development and expansion of this splendid type, by destroying great numbers of the best breeding stock on both sides, and by breaking up the home ties of many more. If the war had not occurred these same men with their descendants would have populated the Western States instead of the racial nondescripts who are now flocking there.

In this social atmosphere, armed with the knowledge of race that the social scientists had given them, historians exposed the folly of radical reconstruction. At the turn of the century, James Ford Rhodes, that intimate friend of New England Brahmins, gave his verdict on Negro suffrage—one that the Dunningites would soon develop into the central assumption, the controlling generalization, of the reconstruction legend. "No large policy in our country," concluded Rhodes, "has ever been so conspicuous a failure as that of forcing universal negro suffrage upon the South. . . . From the Republican policy came no real good to the negroes. Most of them developed no political capacity, and the few who raised themselves above the mass did not reach a high order of intelligence. . . . The negro's political activity is rarely of a nature to identify him with any movement on a high plane. . . . (He) has been politically a failure and he could not have been otherwise."

In the course of time the social scientists drastically revised their notions about race, and in recent years most of them have been striving to destroy the errors in whose creation they themselves played so crucial a part. As ideas about race have changed, historians have become increasingly critical of the Dunning interpretation of reconstruction. These changes, together with a great deal of painstaking research, have produced the revisionist writing of the past generation. It is dangerous, of course, for a historian to label himself as a revisionist, for his ultimate and inevitable fate is one day to have his own revisions revised.

But that has never discouraged revisionists, and we may hope that it never will, especially those who have been rewriting the history of the reconstruction era. One need not be disturbed about the romantic nonsense that still fills the minds of many Americans about their Civil War. This folklore is essentially harmless. But the legend of reconstruction is another matter. It has had serious consequences, because it has exerted a powerful influence upon the political behavior of many white men, North and South.

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MEYER LIBEN

CHANGE OF HEART

A Story

1. My Friend

Do you remember how years ago, and not too many at that, we used to say, in a kind of jocular manner: "my *frand*," not "my *frend*," but "my *fraaand*," carrying the *a* out to inordinate lengths? It was supposed to be funny, but I never could see why. Perhaps it was the trademark of some forgotten radio comic. Nevertheless, I'd laugh, even caught myself using the expression and watching others laugh. It was a way of being part of the group; in order to be part of the group, you had to use group expressions (even those used by other groups), that was part of the fun, though the phrase was not particularly funny, not even intelligent. But I am digressing. The fact is that I had a friend, have a friend, and, as the politicians say: *let me say this*: he's an oddball. I mean that he has curious modes of behavior, is full of unexpected turns, has weird interests and surprising categories of information, sometimes knowledge. I cannot be more specific for reasons which will soon appear.

2. The Reasons Appear

As an author, people are my medium. This is a crude way of putting it, but I can't, at the moment, think of a more elegant way of expressing myself. Very well then. People are my medium. Painters, musicians, need people, everyone needs people, but painters and musicians do not need people the way a novelist needs people. They are, so to say, the substance of his work, the raw material, the substratum, the structural, as opposed to the superstructural elements. One takes his people where he finds them, adds understanding, analysis, maybe a dash of humor, or eccentricity, etc., and comes up with a brew, a person who fits into a given narrative, and generally gets lost in the shuffle. I have used all sorts of people that way, sometimes with success, sometimes in a leaden manner (everything sinks). But that's not the point. The fact is that I cannot use this particular friend because his oddities are so unusual. That is a redundancy, but that is the best way I can say it. What I am saying of this friend is true of all my friends, they all have unusual oddities, cannot be jelled, so to say, to conformations of a conventional sort. I dare say that most of us have such friends. It is only necessary to know people well, and we see how peculiar they are, how they cannot be leveled out in a prose narrative, and that is what we are considering. Maybe that is not true of *all* of my friends, it is certainly true of *most* of my friends, there are always some who are afraid of their oddities, and the fear becomes the real self, so there is nothing odd about them except the fear, and that is monotonous. I cannot, therefore, use my *fraaand* (or any of my friends) because I know them too well. That wouldn't be fatal (for why not write in a careful, measured, objective way about your friends—who would complain if the image is fair, truthful?) except that I am drawn precisely to their oddities, to their most disagreeable traits, drawn to what is most odious in them. And there are crudities, malformations which cannot be disguised. So it is that I have this rich material on hand, and because of my scruples (I guess they're my scruples) cannot make use of it.

3. What to Do?

So I clearly had a problem on my hands, a business problem. I owned, as it were, a valuable piece of property, but could make no use of it; it was too individualistic a holding for my use, for, as the politicians used to say: *let's face the facts,* and the facts are that I cannot make use of those I know who are sharply individuated, for that becomes too delicate a process (and creepy too). These vivid personalities are all too recognizable, so that my problem may not be one of scruples at all, but may boil down to a fear of losing my friends. Auden has pointed out that the Americans are a lonely people, much lonelier than the Europeans (what about the Asiatics and Africans?). That may be so as a generalization, but the only thing that's stopped me from being lonely is that I have friends, and the surest way to loneliness is to lose friends (without making new ones) and the surest way to lose friends is to hold them up to unfavorable public scrutiny, for I've already pointed out that I do not find their better qualities

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MEYER LIBEN's stories have been appearing in COMMENTARY for the past decade, the most recent being "A Note on Chivalry" (December 1962). The present story is part of a work entitled *The Business of Poetry*.

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particularly interesting. I move toward the weird, even the diabolical. And I definitely do not want to be lonely. Circumstances have on occasion made me lonely, but I should like not to repeat those circumstances, so I cannot ruin my friendships, such as they are, for that way lies loneliness. If only I could write about our Founding Fathers, the way Shakespeare wrote about the old British kings, or the Greek dramatists about the old gods and heroes. But I am drawn toward my contemporaries. That's how the billiard balls break. Now I could give up my friend, forget him for purposes of literature, throw him back into the bustling crowd, but that would be most imprudent. I see no reason why this man should not be given his place in the world, if not by me, then by some other author who *could* make proper use of him, that author under no suspicion, being innocent of friendship. But who should I approach with this prize? Ha! I thought of Ned Norris. The very man.

4. No Dice

Ned Norris was a young man who had tried to bypass the Organization by selling his own poems direct, and then, one thing leading to another, he went into the business of selling plots, ideas, etc.—first his own, and then as a middleman. I had had some contact with him a few years back, when I was desperate for a subject matter, and he was, if not invaluable, of some help to me. What actually happened was that I swapped a few ideas which I couldn't use for the subject matter which I needed so much. There was also a cash consideration on my part, because the ideas I submitted didn't add up to much (otherwise I could have made *some* use of them), rather thin, but Ned thought he could place them. I had never gone to him with a full-bodied character of this sort, you might say a living object, unique, idiosyncratic. I approached the merchant carefully. Norris happens to be an exemplary man of business, he is always dealing in sensitive areas where morality and self-interest join, and his reputation is of the highest, deservedly so (it is not so of all the highest reputations). Nevertheless, I approached him carefully, and here it is more a matter of my caution than of his probity. It is like taking a patent to a manufacturer. He is honorable, but you are cautious, because honor has its limits; then, too, there are others in his enterprise, you don't know about them. Also files get lost, papers stolen. There are many reasons for care even in dealing with the purest of individuals. So I told Norris what I had in mind. He listened carefully, then shook his head. "I'm sorry," he said, "but the market seems to be glutted with unique characters at the moment. I've bought three or four of them in the last week—a fantastic miser, a lecher beyond belief, a woman of unimaginable purity. I'm really overbought at the moment." I started to be a bit more cagily specific, to prove the unusual quality of what I was offering him, but he waved me off. "I don't doubt you," he said, "I'm just not in a buying position. Maybe in a couple of months." So we chatted for a couple of minutes, and then shook hands before my departure.

5. Who Then? I Choose Wrong.

If Norris was out of the picture (and he was out of the picture), who then? I knew of no one else in that line (Ned had a monopoly by default, not by merger or conquest). Why not a writer? We are in a competitive field, but that is no reason why we shouldn't do business together, and we do business together (as well as fight for the available material, and steal from one another). Then it became a question of what kind of novelist I should approach. Naturalist? Realist? Symbolist? Regional? Historical? Picaresque? Hard-boiled? Encyclopedic? In thinking of the categories, I hit on the man. He was a solid-type novelist, who moved freely between the Social and Psychological, who had once sold a novel to the movies and was now either in a decline or not publishing. But I knew that he was flexible, had successfully handled extreme characters (what Sherwood Anderson calls "grotesques")—the fact is that once I had thought of the man, I had no difficulties in thinking of numerous reasons for the aptness of my choice. I phoned him—we mixed in intersecting circles—and he said he was interested, so I went over to his apartment the next day. I had to be even more circumspect with him than I had been with Norris, for the author was more interested than the merchant. Also, since my contacts with the author had been peripheral, for the circles in which we moved intersected at close circumferential quarters, he represented for me—and here I am making an unusually mixed mathematical metaphor—an unknown factor in the moral algebra. I showed my caution by talking with complete candor about the general situation, but holding back on the details. "He is fabulous," I said, and I mentioned the names of two Hollywood stars who would be perfect for the role. "Frankly," he said (and that word heightened my circumspection, for when someone introduces a statement by saying "frankly" or "truthfully," or "honestly," I am on my guard, because it is not for the speaker to characterize what he is about to say, it is rather for the listener to judge what it is that the speaker says)—"frankly," he said, "I am interested in what you have to say, because I can use a strong secondary character." "I have a strong primary character," I replied, for it was clear that he was looking ahead to the price differential. "Whatever he is," said the writer, "I need more information." Now if Norris had said that, I'd have given him further information, but I have explained my reasons for my circumspection with this author. So I said nothing about my friend's incredible relations with his wife and children, his attitude toward his parents, but stayed with a certain kind of social behavior. "Well," I said, "he can come into a

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room, look swiftly at all the books on the shelves, and then amaze the company, particularly the host and hostess, by moving unerringly to the shelf when a given book is mentioned, and picking that book out. It is done through the memory of color, shape, and texture. He also knows the maiden name of every President's wife." Now these were not true statements about my friend, but similar in quality to true statements, and when the writer pressed for further information, I gave him more intimate details, not true, but qualitatively analogous. "Come now," he said, "you can do better than that." So I gave a little more information, in the manner I have described. There followed a commercial pause. "Look," he asked, "what do you want for him?" "$2,800," I said, though prepared to settle for something in the area of $1,500. "You must be quite mad," he said, "I'll give you $500." He pulled a checkbook out of the desk drawer. I disregarded that move. "I'm sorry," I said, "but there is no basis for discussion." If I had had papers and a briefcase, I would have put the papers in the briefcase and left. As it was, I just rose and started to leave. He raised the ante to $700. I waved off this amount. "That is not a serious offer," I said, "let's forget it." "I'll go up to $750," he said, "but that's my top." "I'll go down a little," I said, "but first you'll have to come much closer." "No," he said, "that's all I'm prepared to pay," and I believed him, so that was the end of the bargaining.

6. A Moral Question

I was prepared to leave, but he raised a moral question. "Look," he asked, "how come you're making this sales pitch?" I assumed that he didn't like the style of my business approach, and I started to answer accordingly, to justify that style, but he interrupted me: "Oh no, I mean what *right* do you have to sell this character to me? You don't own him. He certainly didn't give you permission." He was of course using the word *character* in its psychological setting, as structure, rather than in the invidious sense in which it has come to be used—*what a character!*—where a certain admiration mingles with a fairly low estimate of the one so described. I was surprised that he had seen fit to raise this question, because he had lived for years in the world of mass magazines, the big publishing houses, even the movies (not only selling a book to them, but writing scenarios), and no milieu can be so demoralizing as the one which is approached with idealistic sentiments where those sentiments have no place to live and breathe. But man's better nature can somehow, sometimes, survive all manner of horror and degradation. "Why," I said, defensively, I admit, "what is this sudden squeamishness on your part?" I wondered suddenly if this weren't a trick, a calculated maneuver to make me lower the price. "After all," I went on, "aren't we all vultures, living on the death of experience, our own and others, do we not circle round, waiting for all signs of life to depart, and not hesitating, when desperate, to attack the living?" I was carried away by my own imagery, saw vultures hovering over far-off deserts where a solitary man stumbles wearily toward his home, his fort, the oasis mirrored in the psyche, but finds no bubbling stream at all, no lovely shade, nature's simplest boon. *"Dead souls,"* muttered the novelist, *"dead souls."* "How wrong you are!" I exclaimed (when I "exclaim" something I always feel like one of the Rover Boys, usually the fun-loving one), "I am *not* selling the dead, I am *not* exploiting the living, I am selling an abstraction, a lifeless structure into which you must breathe a spirit. Call it an idol, even a golem. But who is being hurt, that is my test of morality. Who is being hurt?" "I must say," said my rival, "that your thinking is very shallow, very contradictory, against the canons of both Aristotelian *and* mathematical logic. You're *not* exploiting the living? What do you mean *abstraction?* You are trafficking in human flesh, you are selling a friendship, a living person you cannot make use of. So you peddle him in the market-place, to any comer. What a concept of friendship! What hypocrisy! What *harm* is being done? You sell a friend to a stranger, who may use him in any way that he sees fit, ridicule or cheapen him, and you set up this absurd, self-annihilating pragmatic test, ask who is being hurt." He paused, for breath, and because he had said what he wanted to say. I could not remember the last time I had been spoken to in that way, maybe by an elementary school teacher at whom I had brazenly stared, maybe by my father for breach of some ancient observance. "Well," I asked, "if this behavior of mine is so monstrous, why are you doing business with me? Aren't we in the same boat?" "Oh, of course," he said, "we're certainly in the same boat, but let's understand what it is we're doing, let's not act as though this were a perfectly honorable transaction."

7. My Change of Heart

He was right. No question but that he was right and I was wrong. I have always felt that one changes a point of view, a belief, slowly, that the change is part of the process, the way a tendency turns into a structure, and have always been doubtful of sudden conversions—to God or to Party. We learn slowly, even painfully, must climb to green pastures rather than be catapulted. So I feel that what happened on the road to Damascus was the end of a process, we not quite aware of what went on before. And when the youth (back in the 1930's) signed the Party card, or was simply swept away by a vision of the City of Justice, it needed more than the act of police brutality or the fiery speech from soap box or rostrum. So now, feeling that the novelist was right and that I was wrong, I saw that he pointed up for me what I had long been considering, if not explicitly, and that only

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an exciting cause was necessary to effect a change of heart. I thought of the fuse which (as we learned in high school) set off the powder-keg of Europe. And Lord Grey pointing out, in an image which only visually contradicted the lurid battle flames, that the lights were going out all over Europe. The flames of battle, and the dimming of lights, the diamond points of civilization struggling, the rays sharpened by long labor struggling against the enveloping darkness. But that's off the path. My prospective buyer was right and I was wrong. I was selling what I could not use. I resolved to use it. I resolved to look more honestly at my friend, the one I was selling (they were all for sale); not to focus on his oddities, but to see those oddities in the frame of an ongoing life. Naturally to poke fun at the ludicrous, the irrational, the monomaniacal—consider the debt we owe to Molière—but whatever the emphasis be, the total picture cannot be distorted. Man can become a monster, but the becoming is crucial, as well as the monstrousness. That was the way I changed. "You're right," I said to the novelist, "the deal is off. My friend is not for sale."

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NATHAN ASCH

MY FATHER AND I

THOUGH IT HAS not been written about much, the children of famous artists do not have an easy time, nor do they usually end up well. There is more apostasy, suicide, homosexuality, fraud, and lying, as well as plain ne'er-do-wellism among them than among children of other kinds of people. There is a reason for this. The home and the family are ordinarily created for the purpose of having and bringing up children; but in the homes of artists, everything is concentrated on developing their talent. My mother told me several times that she had early realized she had to make a choice between my father and us, and had chosen my father. But I would have known it, and indeed did know it, long before she told me; the atmosphere of our home was centered on him.

Do I sound resentful, jealous? I must have been so from the beginning, being the son of Sholem Asch.

THROUGH THE WINDOW and framed by it, there rises the great black gothic spire of the Cologne Cathedral; the interior is elegantly furnished, because my father always felt the need for luxury, but it is also crowded with babies, cribs, a stove, cooking pans, and the babies' toys, because we were all living in one room in a foreign country and were poor. In all this teeming disorder there is a recessed alcove, the wall hung with an Oriental carpet, and a plain white kitchen table standing in front of it: between the carpet and the table sits my father fearfully angry, while my mother whispers, "Father is working." That is my first memory of him, and it cannot possibly be an accurate one. Still, the picture persists, though later it dissolves into my father sitting in the same position, his nostrils flaring in anger, before other tables, plain as well as ornamented, now bare except for papers, ink bottle, and colored blotter; now laid with some elaborate chased-leather desk set, inkwells that he never used, a curved blotter pad, a dagger-like paper cutter; or crowded with pieces from his collection of precious objects—Chanukah lamps, filigree spice containers, an ashtray from Pompeii, a small replica of the statue of Apollo from Rome. He wrote in Yiddish, writing from right to left, in uneven lines, the writing becoming smaller at the end of a line and at the bottom of a page, as if he were anxious to get more in; always writing what I couldn't read, because I never learned to read Yiddish. His concentration and drive were so great that it always seemed it would be an overwhelming catastrophe were he to be interrupted; yet interrupt him we did, not only out of carelessness, mix-up, the ordinary ruckus of our games, but as the French say, *exprès*, on purpose. I, at least, wanted to interrupt him, though why, it would be hard to say. It may have been out of envy of his importance to us, or the attention he was getting from my mother, as well as something else—a kind of death wish—for my father, after all, was something like God, and to interrupt God in the midst of work which is obviously more important than oneself is to invite annihilation. I wasn't afraid of being spanked by him; he spanked us sometimes, but not unreasonably; I never brooded about it. Rather, I was almost fascinated by the moment when he would be pulled from his concentration by our noise, and would at first try to disregard it, to remain somehow in his creative world; but we wouldn't let him. Our whispers became louder and turned strident; somebody pushed somebody else, somebody pushed back, there was a sudden shout, somebody punched, somebody screamed. Then came the break: torn from his work, he pushed himself back from the table; came the moment when existence itself teetered; cowering on the floor we stared up at him, no doubt fascinated by the thunder and lightning about to descend on us. My father could look more angry than anyone I have ever known; if you remember how Michelangelo's Moses looks, pointing to the Tablets of the Law, and if you can imagine this same Moses wroth at the moment when he caught the Israelites worshipping the golden idol, fire shooting out of his eyes and his nostrils in overwhelming wrath, you have the image that I have, the memory of my father interrupted at his work.

I can give only the impressions; the facts are all mixed up; we lived in Cologne when I was less than three years old, and none of the nursery paraphernalia could have existed, since my brothers were not born yet. But I had interrupted my father at his work even before that. There is a

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legend in our family that I cried continually during the first six months of my life, howled without a stop; upset and bewildered, my parents didn't know what to do (my father was twenty-one then, my mother, less than eighteen), until my father picked me up by the feet, and while I was thus suspended spanked me vigorously. I was so outraged by the indignity that I shut up and after that howled no more.

LATER, on Sundays in the summer, when we were living in the Polish countryside, delegations of students would come to visit us, to spend the day with my father, who was a symbol of freedom to them. Dozens and dozens of them would come down from Warsaw to talk to him, hear him read from his work in progress, all sharing their food at a great outdoor picnic. It was an important day for the students and usually before they went back to the railroad station, they would pose for a photograph with my father. Some of those pictures are now, I suppose, treasured mementos. In the center is my father and my beautiful mother, holding a baby in her arms; I'm somewhere there at age three or four; and all around us, intently in eternity, are the young students. But once a tragedy occurred: they forgot me; they were grouped around my father and mother, the photographer was poised, warning them not to move, when suddenly my mother exclaimed, "Where is he?" But I wasn't there. I had not been asked to join in the picture. I was somewhere behind the house, my pride hurt. They called me, but I wouldn't come. So they got me; laughing, they carried me back to the others, and put me beside them all, and the picture was taken. It is still in existence. There is the crowd of students, united with my parents in good will, in love. And there in the middle of them am I, but I am separate from the rest of them. I look mean, I hate everybody.

HERE IS another memory: I am sitting in the religious class at school while the other children are being taught the catechism. I was not forced to sit in the Catholic class, but since I was the only Jew in the school they had made no provision for me, and I would get bored waiting on the stairs by myself. I came to know the catechism as well as the others, and I went to the priest and said, "Father, I want to become a Catholic." He must have known who I was because he said, "It would break your father's heart." "I don't care," I said. Was it that I wanted to be like the others, or did I really want to break my father's heart as Herzl's son did when he turned Catholic?

IT GREW harder and harder and finally impossible for my parents to remain in Poland. Once he was married, my father became implicated by association in the activities of my mother's family. Many of them had become revolutionaries, one of my mother's brothers was executed during the uprising of 1906, a sister was exiled to Siberia; and though my mother was not herself involved, sheer family feeling forced her to help them sometimes, which in turn made the authorities suspicious of my father. In addition, his reputation was growing —his books were being translated and his plays produced everywhere in Europe. In 1912, when I was ten years old, we moved to Paris.

The rest of the family had gone on ahead and my father came to fetch me at Lodz. En route, we spent a few days together in Berlin, probably the first time I had ever been alone with him for more than a short period. Those two or three days are like a remembered dream. I took my very first ride in an automobile, and dream-like, it was white; I ate pastries the like of which I never knew existed, I can still taste the thin wafer-like chocolate crusts; I saw the Kaiser, or at least I think I did, walking down a street that must have been *Unter den Linden*. My father tipped his hat to him, and the Kaiser tipped his hat to my father. What more could a little boy want—splendid gestures, ineffable sweets, and honor? What more could he get from his father?

Then Paris, and we lived in a low house on the outskirts of the city, with a garden surrounded by a high wall in which were embedded fragments of broken glass that glistened in the sun. The garden was beautiful on those summer Sundays when friends of my father's from Paris came out to visit us. To those young painters who had fled from the philistines in Poland and were grubbing away in bare attic studios in the Latin Quarter, our house in the suburbs must have been a nostalgic reminder of home. Later when I came back to Paris after the First World War and met them again—Chagall, Kisling, Pascin—as well as other Poles and Rumanians who had been members of the Paris School, they would talk of their visits to our place at Chatillon with tears in their eyes.

In the period before the First World War, the Paris of the artists and writers was in the Latin Quarter, and its center—the pre-World War I equivalent of the Dôme—was the Café d'Harcourt on the Boulevard St. Michel. It was at the d'Harcourt that the Jewish youths from Poland, Rumania, and Russia gathered—those who had come to Paris to begin their career as artists and to become incidentally Europeanized in the process. Though I hardly remembered the place, I had heard many anecdotes about the bohemian life as it was lived there—including the one about the celebrated "duel" fought between Kisling and Gottlieb, another young Polish-Jewish painter, to avenge Polish honor. (Fortunately, no one was hurt, neither of the youths being skilled enough with firearms to do any damage. Legend had it that during the First World War the two met again on the battlefield—Kisling as a soldier in the French army, Gottlieb in the Austrian—and fell into each other's arms. Gottlieb was later killed in battle.)

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I was probably taken to the Café d'Harcourt by my parents in those days and I must have sat big-eyed, sipping a *citron pressé;* and to the Louvre and to the Invalides, and to the little Paris ghetto, by my mother who shopped there for Jewish food. But I did not have a chance to learn much about the city, for after World War I broke out, we all left for America to establish another home there.

WHEN WE first arrived in America, we spent a year in the Bronx, then we lived in Greenwich Village among the bohemians, then rented a house on a bare tract of land near a cemetery at about the place where Brooklyn and Coney Island come together. Then we moved to the south side of Staten Island—still very much the country at the time—and it was in this queer, marginal area, inhabited by Italians, emigré white Russians, and strays from Greenwich Village, that I grew to manhood.

The war in Europe had cut off my father's royalties, and in order to support us all, he was obliged to write a weekly piece for one of the Yiddish newspapers—a stint he continued for thirty years after his arrival in America. The piece (which, incidentally, he loathed writing, for he thought of himself as a novelist primarily) became that week's sermon for the Yiddish-speaking Jews of New York. When he walked along the streets of the Lower East Side, his name was whispered among the people with a kind of awe.

Was I proud of my father? Yes and no. I liked going with him to one of the cafés on the Lower East Side where the Yiddish writers congregated. A stir could be felt in the place when he appeared, with me following. ("Look who's there . . . and who is the boy? . . . That's his son.") While I, aware that I was being stared at, both arrogantly and modestly kept my gaze averted. Yet I didn't like my father reading Yiddish newspapers on the subway as he rode downtown to the Lower East Side, I was ashamed, as if there were something demeaning about it; just as I didn't like my father and mother, who were both handsome people, and well dressed—my father had his clothes made to order, my mother dressed beautifully in the Paris fashion—starting to talk Yiddish in a place where there were no Jews. There was something terrible about that. (I'm frightened while writing this: almost no one will admit the feeling; yet there it was, I had it.)

Once I remember being especially humiliated. It was a Sunday in the summer, and we were all traveling in an open streetcar toward Coney Island. I don't remember what started the commotion, whether my father was riding on the step of the car and the conductor wanted him to go inside or whether the argument was over which of the children was to pay half-fare. At any rate, there were words, and my father lost his temper and raised his fist; but the conductor, instead of surrendering, looked very tough and my father, cowed, gave in completely. So I learned that his anger was the anger of a bully; it was a bluff he tried in order to impress his wife and children.

Yet that is not just: when it confined itself to what was his own, his family and his Jewish world, my father's anger was genuine and sometimes awe-inspiring. During the First World War, the Jews were being persecuted, displaced by the fighting, robbed of their possessions and driven out of their homes. It seemed then that this was the worst that could possibly happen to human beings, and efforts were being made by the Jews of America to help them. The situation was dramatized by plays in the Yiddish theaters. I remember being taken to one of them—a melodrama called "War Sufferers." In one scene a Jewish family huddled destitute and homeless in a windswept place while the patriarchal father, looking like King Lear, defied the elements; at his knees were his wife, his dying son, his daughter who had been raped and made pregnant by the soldiers: the theater resounded with the audience's lamentations, I was crying so hard I almost fell out of the balcony. My father, who was a magnificent speaker, would often at the end of such a play go up on the stage and make an appeal for funds to help the war sufferers. He beat the audience with his anger, he shook it; at the end of one of his passionate orations, the men in the audience flung their wallets on the stage, the women tore off their rings and earrings.

(I am trying to give a picture of my father; yet how shall I draw it? Shall I tell the many things I know about myself, or the few things I know about him? Will talking about me be a reflection of him, since a large part of what I was then was a little bit of him? Or should I try to be objective about him as if he were a stranger? Yet how can I? Most Jews of my age know more about him as a writer, as a public figure, than I do. I can't read Yiddish, for instance, so I have read him only in translation. For the son of one of the greatest Yiddish writers not to be able to read his father in the original, that is crazy. But it isn't my fault. I was never taught Yiddish. . . .)

I DON'T KNOW why I started to write. If anything, the fact that my father was a writer held me back. Yet reasons are rarely single: one of mine must have been that I wanted to be as my father was at his best—god-like at the writing table in spite of how much I also resented this omnipotent posture of his. At any rate, it was pleasant being awakened one night by him and my mother when they returned from the city with the new issue of the *Nation* that contained my first published book review. My father, though, did not take seriously my wish to become a writer.

A year or two later, I was in Paris, having gravitated to Montparnasse, with neither money nor prospects, trying to write. For a year I kept going out of sheer stubbornness. ("Speaking now as a writer," my father had said on one occasion

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when I read him two stories I had written, "I find no talent in you.") But at the end of the year—during which I had starved, borrowed, mooched, had met Ford and Hemingway, and been encouraged as well as patronized and snubbed by both of them—my first book was finished, and I was no longer alone, for I had fallen in love with L., whom I would later marry. To this day I don't know how I survived, because I was supremely careless with money when I did get it. With the exception of the rigid determination with which I faced my writing, the undeviating truth that I tried to put down, there was no order, no method in me. My world became so circumscribed that all I needed in order to be able to work in a state of perfect relaxation was to have on hand the seven francs that would buy me a horsemeat steak at the *crémerie* and three or four cigarettes to smoke during the next three hours. There was one more need—to get through the downstairs hall so the concièrge wouldn't see me and ask about the rent.

During that year, my father turned up only once. (My parents had returned by that time to Europe and were living in Nice, where they would remain until the outbreak of the Second World War. It had become clear that my father would never really feel at home in the United States. How little he knew about America can be seen in one of his stories where he described a "Yankee colonel from Kentucky.") On the occasion of his Paris visit I was in the midst of trying to grow a beard. He immediately took me to a barber, who shaved it off. Other than that, the year was unmarked by his influence, except that friends of his from the early days in Paris—Chagall, Kisling, Pascin—would look in on me once in a while. Kisling often bought me meals; now and then I went with Pascin and his cronies on dinner orgies on the Upper Boulevards. On these occasions we spoke French or Polish, functioning, so to speak, only within their French or Polish worlds, for they did not know English, the language in which I was writing, and about a world that was foreign to them. Until I met Hemingway and Ford (which came about as a result of having submitted a story to *Transatlantic Review*) and began speaking English out loud again, it was a secret language to me, almost a dead language.

The handicap to me as a writer of being my father's son did not exist yet in that Paris year. Hemingway knew nothing about my father, although later they met and liked each other; Ford in his insular British way had never even heard of him. The following year, however, when my book had already been accepted by a New York publisher, and several of my stories had been published in avant-garde magazines in Germany my father was asked by a reporter for one of them—eager, of course, to exploit and sensationalize any split between the generations—what he thought of me as a fellow writer. "I have no opinions of him as a writer," he allegedly said, "but I still have to send him money." My father later denied making the statement, but I am inclined to believe he did, for the wit is typical of him. Later he professed to become an admirer of my prose. Coming from Berlin, he would remark to me, "You're getting to be more famous than I am, what with Wertheim's devoting a whole table to your work." I was not, of course, more famous than he and he knew it; he was merely implying, during that short time when I was becoming very well known in Germany, that the world must be out of joint if one of the biggest department stores in Berlin would devote an entire table to me.

Yet my father could sometimes become sentimental about his family. At my sister's wedding in Nice, years later, bunches of magnificent flowers were suddenly brought in. My brother and I were in Hollywood at the time and had wired the flowers with instructions that they be delivered during the wedding. My father, I was told, burst into tears, declaring that only sons of his were capable of such a beautiful gesture.

HE AND MY MOTHER liked L. when they met her the following year in Paris. They had taken a house in nearby Bellevue, and L. stayed with them. She was beautiful and charming, and my father was so taken with her that as a wedding present he presented us with the contents of the house in storage in New York; they included all the necessities of housekeeping, down to a dish-drainer. There must have been few more auspicious starts of a career than mine, that autumn in New York. A first book to be published at the age of twenty-three, a beautiful wife, an apartment furnished with highboys and lowboys, handturned and handpainted, porcelains, carpets, dining-room furniture that today must be in some museum. We had absolutely everything but money. When my father visited New York that winter he practically lived with us, arriving every afternoon for his nap—lying on our sofa with his shoes off. The apartment was again quiet ("Father is sleeping") as our house had been during my childhood. There was a fine atmosphere to the place, and it was a pity that soon after he went back to Europe, we had to give it up, break the lease, and since we were penniless, sell my books and put the furniture up for auction. Today those authentic American pieces would bring in a fortune, but then they brought in a pittance; in the winter L. and I moved into a frozen Connecticut farmhouse.

The year was 1926, and through the following years until the Second World War the pattern of my life was set. It was a whirling and chaotic pattern, the desperate center of which was New York. I hated living in New York, and whenever I could, I escaped from it, returning only when driven back by absolute necessity. In the beginning, I went back only occasionally when I had to see a publisher, for L. was getting a small allow-

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ance from her parents and we could live on that. But then came a time when the money stopped, and we went back to one room on Grove Street in the Village. Sometimes when we were on the verge of destitution, I would start thinking of the Lower East Side and my father's friends from whom I could borrow money. The managing editor of his newspaper was sympathetic, and occasionally one of my father's admirers would give me a check.

But my feelings about the Lower East Side were not altogether mercenary. Sometimes when I was in New York alone, or after I had spent the day indoors with L. who had weak lungs and was often bedridden, I would find myself going across town (by that time a little drunk, having first made the rounds of familiar places in the Village) to that literary café where my father was known. I knew that every evening at a certain time, my father's best friend, Dr. G., would be there. He was a man I loved; he had known me as a child, treating me strictly, though always, I felt, with justice. He was a kind of stern father, whom I respected without criticizing, and it may have been him that I went to see. In any case, those visits to the café, where I had gone with my father as a boy, were a kind of homecoming, though the original visits had never seemed particularly homelike. I was greeted by the waiters; and now, when people looked up and asked who I was, they were told not only that I was my father's son, but also that I was an American writer. There was perhaps a certain snobbish satisfaction in realizing that while all those writers grubbed away in their obscure Yiddish, I had graduated, passed into the magnificently rich, great English language. Again, I could modestly, and at the same time arrogantly, look away while being aware that people were talking about me.

In 1930, L. and I separated. That summer, I went back to Europe—perhaps because we had been happy together there, perhaps because I had never had a home, and was always looking for one in the next place, the next country.

The few weeks I spent with my father that summer were happy—one of the periods when there was no strain between us. We made a daily ritual of taking the train to Paris, and walking in the streets for hours, talking about everything in the world. We even had a friendly rivalry over a girl who was a friend of my sister's, a handsome Bretonne who designed knitted garments; she was modest, clean looking, and not sexy, and therefore all the more exciting. My father had been flirting with her paternally even before I arrived, and I began flirting with her fraternally, and she seemed to enjoy it.

PARIS was our city, yet it was a different city for each of us, since each of us had used it at a different time in history. We walked through the gray light of the Paris streets, talking of things I am no longer able to remember, unimportant but satisfying things, not intense with one another but almost playful, almost teasing. We were not father and son but more like two friends, whose friendship fed even on their silence. We drifted toward Montparnasse and had lunch at the Coupole: cold salmon with cucumber sauce, and a wonderful Montrachet. I can still taste the coolness and the tartness. Afterward I leaned back and said in Russian *à la* Chekhov, "Oh, how we suffer!" It broke him up. He thought it was the funniest thing he had ever heard in his life, and his thinking so, quite spontaneously, was the most flattering thing that had ever happened to me.

The time passed pleasantly. As I was leaving for the boat train and we were all saying goodby, my father made a courteous gesture: he told the concièrge to carry out my bags, as one does for a visitor, instead of letting me, a boy with whom one need not engage in amenities, carry the bags myself.

It may have been the memory of the good relation between us that prevented me, a year later when I was alone and starving in Dallas, from appealing to him for help. It was a reverse gesture on my part. From time to time in our lives we had corresponded with one another, but it was difficult since he did not write English. Usually he wrote me in phonetic English script, but if the matter was of importance he wrote in Yiddish, and hoped I could get it read. And so I would go looking for some storekeeper in the Jewish section of town, who was always glad to read the letter to me, but looked bewildered when he realized who had written it, unable to understand (nor could I, for that matter) how such a distinguished father could have such an ignorant son.

Now in Dallas, I was ignoring letters from him asking about my plans, when one day my brother turned up, enroute to California, where he was going to study agriculture. My father had told him to look for me. By that time, I was barely alive, a derelict, sleeping in the bus terminal, for the owner of the hotel I had been staying at had finally locked me out for not paying the rent. Seeing my brother, I decided I was tired of starving and I went along to the Coast with him, determined to get a job writing scenarios for pictures. Some four months later—on sheer nerve—I had a contract with Paramount and the relief was so great I found myself smiling all the time. I wrote a triumphant letter to my father, and received a cable that he was in difficulties, and needed money immediately. It made me fearfully angry—his request for help at the very first moment I had raised my head from the ground. It showed lack of imagination, a want of empathy. Of course I may have been angry because his reputation as a writer was shadowing mine; on the first day of my Paramount job, as I was being introduced around the Paramount offices, some fool executive had said: "If you're half as good as your father you'll be a bargain to us."

When my father came back to America in 1938,

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my situation had altered radically. My name had been wiped out in Germany, and my books burned: and though a book of mine about a long bus trip I had taken had been published the year before, nobody in the miserable mood of the Depression wanted to read about American troubles. Also, I was faced with the obligation to support the child L. and I had had. When my father arrived—he was on a fund-raising trip for the relief of the Jewish victims of Hitler, organized by the Joint Distribution Committee—I had given up writing and was working for the Federal Government in Washington.

Like the time in Berlin and the time in Paris, I remember those few days with pleasure. I had taken several days of annual leave from my Washington job, and stayed with him in the luxurious hotel suite that had been provided for him. I would wake up in the spacious bedroom, and call out to him in the adjoining bedroom: "Are you awake yet?" "I'm lying here, thinking," he would reply. "What would you like for breakfast?" "I'm thinking of all the breakfasts I've ever had," I said one morning, "and of the one breakfast I've always dreamed of." "What kind of breakfast is that?" he asked. "I've always dreamed of having chicken livers for breakfast." The next thing I knew I was calling room service and after a while a splendid-looking dish of chicken livers appeared; but somehow they were a disappointment, not the chicken livers of mine or my father's dreams.

We spent entire days talking, people dropped in for drinks, my father gave a dinner party for Dr. G. and other friends. One afternoon, I remember, he took me to lunch with someone he hardly knew, but whom I loathed at least by reputation. The man was a right-wing columnist for the Hearst papers, and so far as I was concerned, a Fascist; apart from that, he was a sell-out, a Jew who truckled to Jew-baiters, and a Jew-baiter himself, all of which I tried to explain to my father in his innocence. I went along out of curiosity, wondering why this man had asked to see my father. It turned out that he wanted to unburden himself, to tell my father the story of his life, to confess, to explain himself. I was always curious why people did that with my father, why he represented a final honesty to them, a truth which until they tried to bring out to him, they did not know they had in themselves. To many, he was a kind of priest, confessor, giver of absolution, who by the very fact that he listened and nodded and understood, lightened the burden, took away some of the guilt. Hundreds of people had told him the story of their lives, women had sent him photographs of themselves in the nude, as if in an effort to show themselves without covering, without subterfuge.

It must have been about this time that, in terrible prescience of the coming catastrophe, he began leaving the Jewish world, the world that was moving toward extinction, and withdrawing himself into the past, into that queer moment in Western history two thousand years ago when the Jews had split; and he started accounting for the split, explaining it from the Jewish point of view, began to retell the Christ story as it appeared to those whom, though they were of good will, Christ was leaving. I don't consider myself competent—neither learned enough, nor even interested enough—to speak out on this. I am trying to suggest only that he saved himself much misery when he stopped writing about the Jews of Poland just before they were wiped out completely, as he retreated from the present into a past that one cannot be sure even existed actually, but which is imperishable, ineradicable for that very reason.

I had prescience, too, then; we all had prescience, as we were watching Europe. After my father went back to Nice, I began writing him, urging him to give up Europe and return to America; and so he gave up the house in Nice with the swimming pool, and my mother and he returned to New York.

HE WAS NOW close to sixty years old, an age when many men are about to retire; he could not have known that a whole new career was starting for him. With Europe closed off, his books about the early days of Christianity were about to make a sensation with the English-speaking public; one of them would even be bought by the movies. About to become a successful popular writer in the United States, he was to lose his almost mystical reputation as a Jewish leader, for the Jews bitterly resented his speculations on the origins of Christianity. But the Christian public was fascinated; professors of theology and Christian philosophers began corresponding with him. There were even rumors that he was considering conversion, but he never discussed the subject with me. I don't think, however, that he felt a definite stand on his part was necessary, for he considered himself a fiction writer and not a theologian. He thought of himself, I believe, as a teller of tales, a poet, what is called in German a *Dichter*.

HE AND my mother bought a house in southern Connecticut. I had married again and was living in Saratoga Springs in upstate New York, and had once more begun writing. My son was in boarding school, not too far away from where my parents were living. My father had learned to drive and sometimes, when his work wasn't going well, he would drive out to my son's school and bring the boy back home with him. There was no sympathy between them, only silence and strangeness. The disconnection was too great; the boy did not even have the awe of him that I had had: his grandfather was merely someone very odd, of whom he was not the least bit afraid, to whom he was, however, always polite—for he had good manners. There was no talk, nor could there be any between them; to amuse the child, my father would start

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showing him his collection of religious objects, and the child would stare at them, listening to my father's broken English, which he hardly understood and which would not have interested him in any case. During my own childhood, I did not perhaps know much more than my son about the true significance of those objects, but I did have, through some tie with my father, a kind of primitive mystical regard for them. To my son they meant nothing, nor did the Oriental rugs, the period furniture, the books with the strange Hebrew characters. The boy preferred the horses at his school, and when pressed, he expressed this preference, which I, with my split background, would never have dared to do. It made my father sad rather than angry as he would have been with me, for a grandfather can hardly react as violently as a father. A lot of time had gone by: he was no longer as sure of his absolute rightness as he had been during his young manhood. Some of what had gone wrong may, he thought, have been his fault: in some way he had failed.

ONCE a year my father would come up to Saratoga Springs to take a cure. I was having an extremely hard time getting along. I sold stories, but only rarely, and my wife had taken a job as a part-time instructor in a local college. My father would break into our teeming poverty with a bang. Though he was visiting with us, it did not suit him to descend to our standard of living, but like an oriental potentate he brought his rich surroundings with him. Now when I went shopping, I had large bills in my pocket and did not bother to ask about prices but chose for quality instead. Cooking became easier during his stay, with steaks and legs of lamb to prepare instead of stews; cream was beaten into the mashed potatoes; there was a bottle of French wine on the table. If my mother was along with him, they stayed at one of the elaborate boarding houses in Saratoga that were fast becoming like luxurious European pensions, crowded with rich German-Jewish refugees continuing the European custom of a yearly cure. At their hotel, C. and I would feast on little fresh lima beans bursting with goodness, mushrooms under glass, triple-sized lamb chops. After lunch my parents would return for their naps to their room where their expensive traveling accoutrements were scattered about—how I envied them those!—fine travel rugs, bags fitted with silver, tortoise shell toilet articles. Afterward, my father and I would go for a long walk.

While he was visiting in Saratoga I would cease to be myself and become exclusively my father's son. It was nothing he demanded or even suggested; but he was so overwhelming, he so much took for granted that the world turned only around him, that I accepted it, or played along with it. He was always friendly and relaxed at those times and even concerned about me in my penurious state. Once he said to me, "If I were in your place, I wouldn't accept it. I'd raise such a scandal!" I never stopped wondering what he meant by that. Raise a scandal with whom? With myself for not writing more salable stories? With the publishers and magazines for not buying them? With him for daring to flaunt his riches, his ease before me?

ALWAYS at the end of his stay in Saratoga, I would begin to worry about money. It wasn't so much that C. and I were about to descend to our usual standard of living as the fact that while he had been staying with us, casually handing out tens and twenties for the daily expenses, I would invariably have become careless with our own funds. The same would be true at the end of each of his visits: waving him off in his car, on the road leading to Albany, we would be flat broke. This practice had started when he came to visit in Paris while I was writing my first book and more or less starving. While he was there, he had me living like himself for the duration of the visit: fine food and liquor, taxis everywhere, suites of rooms at hotels: "What do you need?" he would ask me, and insist on buying me a new pair of pants, or give me one of his old made-to-order suits. When the visit ended, he would kiss me tearfully, and go off; if I didn't press him, he wouldn't leave me a sou. Whenever the day of his departure from Saratoga approached, I would tell myself that he surely realized we had been living much beyond our means, that as a writer he could certainly conceive of such things, that to allay my anxiety he would surely bring up the subject very soon. Waiting for him to do so darkened the end of each of his visits—preventing me from thinking about anything else. Finally, in desperation, I would ask him, sometimes, having postponed it to the very last moment. Immediately, a look of annoyance and weariness would come over his face. He would always, in the end, leave me a small sum, but with it he always left a mood of unpleasantness, making me regret that I had asked him; I should have done anything rather than that—though the electric bill had not been paid, and the service would be cut off; though C. and I would have no supper that night.

IT WOULD have been better perhaps, over the years, if we had made a clean break. But no; after months of reserve there would suddenly be a telephone call: my mother had to be off somewhere, my father's work was going well at the moment, he needed C. to superintend the house, would she come tomorrow? She went; a couple of weeks of loneliness followed; then I would drive down to Connecticut to take her back, my mother having in the meantime returned. I would arrive in their beautiful home, to find my wife relaxed and smiling (my father had bought her a new dress, my mother, grateful, had given her a piece of jewelry). An elaborate family dinner would fol-

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low. The next day C. and I would set out on the homeward trip to Saratoga, with just enough gas in the tank to get us there, and a dollar and a half or so in my pocket.

The war broke up this situation. Finding myself spending more time at the radio than at my typewriter, I decided to enlist in the army (C. was to follow six months later). My father was pleased and proud. He put up a flag with service stars in the window, just as though we had gone off to fight from his house. My sister, who was married to an Englishman, had been evacuated to the United States with her little girl, and it was the first time in years that the entire family was together. At a dinner he gave for us all at a New York hotel, I saw him as he must have been seeing himself: the patriarch with his sons and their wives and their children. We drank the martinis and ate the enormous turkey served to us, but I felt awkward and self-conscious for I did not approve. I dislike the patriarchial concept: it goes back to a tradition I was never part of; and my father's benign mien, his complacency and self-satisfaction, were not, I felt, justified. I blamed myself for not basking in the rays of his beneficence, for not sitting, so to speak, at his feet. I was glad when the dinner was over. But I did approve when, on the night before I went off to camp, he gave C. and me some money and told us to go night-clubbing. It was what I would have done in his place.

He was as proud as could be when I returned from the war, trim and military-looking, and insisted upon knowing immediately the significance of each of the ribbons on my chest. He asked about my plans for the future and I told him I felt I had wandered around enough through all those unquiet years; it was time I did solid work again. My idea was to go out to the Coast, and find a house to live in, and stay there and work. He very much approved and promised to help. This was a decisive moment in my life. I was well over forty years old, having as yet accomplished little that was substantial, because of restlessness and disorganization. C. and I had agreed: if only we had a place of our own, walls that we knew, rooms that we were at home in, shelves into which we could put our books, and boxes into which we could stuff our papers. It was with my father's comforting assurance that he had put away a sum sufficient for a down-payment on a house for us, that I went out to the Coast, and C. joined me. We were not going to take just any house—the finding of the right house took on the quality of a powerful, almost a sacred obligation. So it came as a shock a year later when I called my mother from California to tell her we had found the house, and she replied, laughing a little with embarrassment, that while they had, indeed, been keeping a sum of money for me, they had recently had occasion to buy a Rembrandt at such a low price that they could not resist spending the money on that instead. The point is not that they failed me; in fact they didn't, for in the end they did provide some of the money, though less than they had promised, and I was able to buy the house from which I have been writing this memoir. It is rather that they did not take their promise to me seriously; it was not grave to them; they attached no importance to something that was an overwhelming matter to me. The shock lay in the realization that I, who was of such importance to myself, did not outweigh their whim to possess a certain painting. Again the brooding started in me, again the thrashing at my end of the line that attached me to them—the line that has never been cut off.

Yet even as I write, a different sort of memory comes to me: I had loved wood for a long time and the idea of making things to live with out of it. After we had moved into the house on the side of the hill and it became obvious to C. and me that we would not be able to furnish the house with the kind of furniture we liked—solid, made of good wood, well-finished—I told C., perhaps bragging a little, that I had always felt I would be able to make furniture if only I had the opportunity. She teased me about it and, slightly piqued, I enrolled in a night class in woodworking at the nearby high school, determined to make good my boast. I had no idea, though, that a rush of feeling toward woodworking would flow out of me. I had mentioned this new hobby to my parents at some point, and my mother said she had always wanted a night stand for the side of her bed with special features like space for books and newspapers, and a small cabinet for pills and bottles of medicine. I promised to make her such a piece in walnut.

When it was finished, I sent it off with some trepidation, wondering how my amateurish effort would look in a roomful of period antiques. Not long after, my mother wrote me that the piece not only fitted perfectly with the rest, but that my father was extraordinarily excited by it. He would finger the hard walnut finish and the rounded surfaces, exclaiming about how he hadn't believed I was capable of the patience and tenderness required to fashion such an object. He sent me in return a beautiful cashmere jacket I had admired, and an unusually tender letter written in his phonetic English, describing a feeling he had long had—perhaps the same as my own—that he, too, could make furniture if he tried. Now, of course, it was too late; but perhaps not, symbolically, since his son was doing it.

The last time I saw my father was when I flew across the country to visit him in Miami Beach, where he and my mother had finally settled. I had been receiving letters for some time complaining that I made no effort to come East to see them, that they were lonely for me, that they were both getting old. Thinking of the three thousand expensive miles that separated us, with C. and me just

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barely managing to get along, I wrote a letter, explaining that the only thing preventing me from visiting them was the lack of money, whereupon I received a long distance telephone call followed by a wired remittance for the fare. The next thing I knew I was on an airplane, then in a taxicab driving past the commonplace city of Miami heading out toward the fabulous beach. On one of the man-made islands along the causeway that separated the city from the beach the taxi stopped—before two small but beautiful buildings that were dwarfed by the palace-like structures rising on both sides of them. It was in these buildings that my parents lived—deliberately without ostentation, as though telling the world that though the land on which they had built their home was among the most costly in the world, and though the mansions of their neighbors proclaimed its cost, they had chosen instead to live simply and in good taste. In one of the cottages they slept and my father did his writing; the other consisted of a dining room, a kitchen, and a guest room. The cottages were surrounded by thick grass and enormous clumps of magnificent flowers; nearby was a private dock from which my father fished. Inside was all their lovely furniture, the pictures they had collected, the great white Chinese rug, the books, the art objects, the Jewish religious pieces, the ashtray from Pompeii, and the little Apollo from Rome. Inside was both the memory of my childhood and something else that I had completely lacked in my life, a feeling of relaxation, of ease, of casualness almost. Perhaps it was confronting both these elements that got my visit off to a bad start. My father, after greeting me tenderly, took me for a ride with him in his new automobile, and passing a golf course, said, "Wait for me." He then disappeared to play a few holes of golf, while I, who had just traveled thousands of miles to see him, sat waiting in the car.

Beneath my annoyance at what he said and did, and what he did not say or do—there was, of course, something deeper; when I was with him I did not know whether I was still a child dependent on him, or a grown man. At that moment, in fact, a grown man of nearly fifty, I was utterly dependent on him: what if he suddenly said, "Get out of my house"? There I was stranded, a continent away from my home in California. Though this particular fear was allayed when he bought me a return ticket a week later, the feeling grew on me as the days passed that he sometimes forgot altogether that I was there. There were also pleasant moments, to be sure, and moments even of profound understanding. Every morning he would come into the little house in which I slept—the maid did not arrive until later—and make coffee for the two of us. He would bring the two cups into my room, sit down on the edge of the bed, and we would talk. But there was no quiet, nothing settled between us. The mysterious conflict ready to burst out waited inside each of us; at any moment either of us, it always seemed, could suddenly, finally, erupt. After a few days, I grew tired of doing nothing but wait for him—of lying down when I wasn't sleepy, of watching him perched at the end of his private dock pretending to fish. Sometimes, as I stood watching him, an excursion steamer would appear from around the curve in the shore, filled with tourists gaping at the fabulous waterfront estates. The voice of the guide delivering his spiel through a megaphone—how much each estate had cost, who was living in it—came clearly over the water. As the boat passed by Father's dock the guide told the tourists—you could see their faces staring at my father—who lived there and what he was famous for.

My bitterness was flowing over. At lunch the next day, my father absent-mindedly asked me to reach over and get a bottle of wine out of the sideboard. I reached for the wrong one, and he grew impatient. "Not that one," he said angrily. "Which one do you want?" I asked. "*That* one!" he shouted, pointing to about a dozen bottles. It was too much. "To hell with it!" I cried, getting up and stomping out of the room. I slammed the door behind me in the bedroom, and started brooding. From the dining room I could hear the sounds from childhood and after a while my mother came into my room, as in the past. "I'm sick of this millionaire's estate and of the way you millionaires are living," I told her. "I'm going to a hotel and stay there until my flight back is due. You'll have to let me have enough money to last until then." At that moment my father came in. On his face was all the anger I had come to know through the years. His nostrils were flaring, his eyes flashing, he was raising his clenched fist as if about to strike me. But he only laid the fist against my face. "You hate me," he said. "You have always hated me." "You're talking nonsense," I replied. "You know that I don't hate you, or I wouldn't have come all the way out here. Only you have been acting very strange—treating me as if I were a child. I am wondering why you asked me to come." "He still thinks of you as a child," said my mother, trying to intervene, but we both ignored her. "I don't want my friends to think you've suddenly run off," my father continued. "You'll have to stay here, and we'll both have to control ourselves, until the day of your flight."

I didn't like that. If you have a temper, live by it; don't compromise suddenly, don't give in all at once. It reminded me of that incident years before, in Brooklyn, when he had bullied the street-car conductor, only to give in completely when the other man stood his ground. I was disappointed. The image of my father crumbled a little: he was less. But we got along better after that. They gave a party for me at which his friends were pleasant, and eager to hear about life near glamorous San Francisco. Again my father would appear in my bedroom each morning with coffee for the two of us, and we would talk. It was, I

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recall now, on one of those mornings that he said it would be impossible to tell the truth about the relation between people, while I maintained that it was possible, and that I would try to do it. I said goodby to him and my mother one evening before we all went to bed. While he was still asleep, in the early morning, a taxi came to the twin houses on the island and took me away.

I HATED my father, that was part of what made him so real to me. I hated him and was afraid because I hated him. Yet I loved him because after all I was his child, and when I had lain paralyzed with sleeping sickness he had held my hand and had whispered, "If there is any way of letting me know you are alive by squeezing my hand, squeeze it," and I had tried with all my strength and had not been able to. I had loved my father and hated him and had also been completely alienated from him —that is, I had tried to think differently from him and do things as he would not have done them, and sometimes had been ashamed of him and sometimes had been proud of him, and sometimes had been both at the same time. Victor Hugo could speak of the art of being a grandfather, but who would dare to speak of the art of being a father, or a son?

ONE DEVASTATING morning very, very early, the telephone rang. It was my brother calling from New York: "Father is sick." What did he mean—sick? Does an oak get sick? It turned out he had had a stroke while on a trip to Israel. I felt nothing, there was a kind of hush over my mind. Next day came word that he was better, they were going to bring him back to London, where he was now living. He did not know he had suffered a stroke, and they had decided not to tell him.

I wrote him a letter. I wrote it one morning without really knowing what I was saying, but convinced that I was saying exactly the right thing. I must have been possessed by some kind of genius at that moment, it must have been one of those rare times when all one's faculties are functioning in exactly the right way. Without really knowing what I wrote in that letter to my father, I am nonetheless convinced that had I but written other things in my life as well, I would be known today as a great writer. Whatever was in the letter must have helped him, for a few months later I received a beautiful reply from him written in that funny phonetic way he used to write to me, so that I could hear him speaking the letter in his own accent. (As a little boy I had been ashamed of my father's accent, now I thought it was charming. Yet—charming. Is that a way to feel about one's father?)

The sense I had that my letter was a kind of sustenance to him sustained me also. There was almost something mystical about the letter. My sister later told me that he kept it constantly by him, as though it was something to hold on to, to keep him going; he talked to her and to my mother about it. He seemed to have a kind of wonder about me: for all that we quarreled, sometimes he thought something I did was so outstanding he could not believe it came from me, who had come from him.

A SECOND telephone call came from my brother. He was crying. Even before he spoke the words, his sobbing struck me as infinitely tragic, as if something had broken, as if the sun had failed to rise in the morning, or the sea was gone, or there were no more birds anywhere. Yet until he would speak the words—the event had yet to occur. The words then would become bullets, stones; they could hurt, they could kill, they were about to kill, but hadn't yet. Father was not dead but had to be uttered dead; the words would come and at that moment Father would die. A moment later my brother said between sobs, "Father is dead," and then Father died. I swear I did not think of anything and I did not particularly feel anything either, and I mean this because one *does* know when one feels something, otherwise it's all doubletalk. Around ten o'clock the phone rang and it was a reporter for the local newspaper. "It says on the news ticker your father is dead." I said, "Yes." He asked if my father had been sick for a long time, and I told him he had suffered a stroke a few months before but had not known it because the press had been asked not to print it. He was very much impressed by that. "I was crazy about his books," said the newspaperman. "He was a great man." I said, "Will you excuse me," and hung up. Immediately the telephone rang again, and it was a woman interviewer for a local radio station. She said, "I hear your father is dead. I want you to come up and tell us all about him tomorrow night at nine." I'm not good at repartee. I said lamely, "I can't do that." She said, "Why not? Of course you can." The funny thing is that I wanted to explain why not, but I didn't know how, so I hung up on her.

There is a cloud over the rest of the day on which I learned of the death of my father, except that every now and then, I remember, I would peer out of the hole I was huddled in and I would tell myself, Today is something else, after today everything will be different. I met C. that evening about ten miles from where we live and we were driving silently toward home when suddenly I found myself weeping, and at the same time admiration for myself swept over me. I thought, I'm quite a fellow, a grown man able to let go so completely, and I was ashamed of myself for being such a phony. I said to C., "Excuse me." "It's all right," she said. A terrible need for truth took me then. I wanted to know how I really felt, and I wanted either to express it or not, simply, without thinking about it. I was weeping harder and harder. "You don't understand," I said. She said, "Don't worry about it." I said, "He was my father."

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MLF & Other Problems

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

This department, conducted for the past three years by Hans J. Morgenthau and devoted to a wide range of political and social questions, will be conducted throughout the coming year by GEORGE LICHTHEIM. *One of our contributing editors, Mr. Lichtheim is the author of* Marxism *(1961) and* The New Europe *(1963), and is spending the current academic year as a Senior Research Fellow at Columbia University.*

I HEREBY MAKE my bow as a guest columnist temporarily displaced from my usual habitat in one of London's quieter residential suburbs, lodged for some months on the outskirts of a university campus in Manhattan, and coincidentally promoted to academic status. This is the first and last piece of information about myself ever to be inflicted upon the readers of COMMENTARY. What follows are casual reflections—all of them personal—passing through the mind of a visitor who normally makes his home in England. Some of them might equally well have been put down abroad, and in that case would probably have taken the form of a London Letter. Others arise from the contrast between one's customary surroundings and the relative unfamiliarity of the American scene (re-visited for the first time in six years).

* * *

THE FIRST SHOCK comes on realizing how unimportant Britain has become in American eyes, how little its affairs matter even to the minority which takes an interest in such things, and how unaffected public opinion here was by the recent change of government in London. To people in Britain this change was important—and not only on election night. To Americans it seems to matter not at all whether Britain is governed by Tories or Labourites; what counts are the pound sterling and the MLF: in other words, whether the British can be relied upon to pull their weight within the Atlantic Alliance. For the rest, they are welcome to do whatever they like on their quaint little island—even to nationalize their steel industry, though such a thing would not be tolerated nearer home.

I confess I find this indifference annoying. Though merely a naturalized citizen of Britain, I naturally want my country of adoption to be taken seriously. It also irritates me that most of the news from home is about trouble of some kind. I am somewhat in the position of the refugee professor in Oxford who in 1947, at the time India got its independence, was overheard to remark, "Now that I've been naturalized they're giving away my Empire." What they are giving away at the moment is not quite clear: apparently the so-called Independent Nuclear Deterrent of which Mr. Harold Wilson, *before* the election, was wont to remark that it was neither independent nor a deterrent to anyone. Whatever it is, there is little reliable news about it in the American papers, and what there is suggests that the real problem for the Washington policy-makers is to satisfy the Germans. The British, it seems to be assumed, are mainly intent on face-saving. If they can quietly get rid of their expensive nuclear establishment by assigning it to NATO, it is thought, they will do so, even though there may be a patriotic outcry from the Tories. After all, this is an issue on which Labour and the Liberals are substantially agreed. Labour wants to save money; the Liberals want to be as close as possible to their spiritual home, the United States. What could be simpler than the solution apparently thought up by the Wilson government: turn over the whole of Britain's aging nuclear arsenal (not just the three, or five, as yet unbuilt Polaris submarines) to the proposed Multilateral Force. That takes care of Atlantic solidarity, pleases the Americans, and has the additional advantage of annoying both the French and the Germans: the former because they will be left out in the cold, the latter because their plan for becoming the United States's favored ally will be effectively disposed of.

It is all very neat and ingenious—the kind of political chess unendingly played by the personages in those pleasantly soporific novels churned out by Lord Snow of Leicester. Maybe he thought it up. In that case he will probably describe it lovingly as soon as Lewis Eliot finds time to set his thoughts down on paper. Meanwhile, I am constrained to note that none of my American acquaintances seems very interested. They take it for granted that somehow or other, sooner or later, the Wilson government will fall in with whatever Washington thinks essential for the health of the Alliance. Real trouble is expected from only one quarter—Paris.

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HERE, THEN, is something of a poser. Though an old admirer of the General (*"Gaulliste de gauche,"* as they say in Paris), and totally disinclined to take M. Gaston Defferre, or any other Opposition candidate to the Presidency seriously—if I were a Frenchman and had ten votes, de Gaulle would get them all—I cannot quite resign myself to a situation where my adopted country ranks so far behind its principal European rival. Of course, the British have only themselves to blame. If Harold Macmillan, in December 1962, had stayed in Paris instead of going to Nassau, and offered the French a nuclear deal on equal terms, Europe would now be home and dry. In all probability Britain would have entered the Common Market, West Germany would have been kept in its proper place at the end of the table, and the MLF would have been strangled at birth; whereas now it looks like killing its mother, the Atlantic Alliance. But all that is water over the dam. When it comes to the point, the British will probably always prefer a secondary status within the Anglo-American world to equal status with mere Continental Europeans. In this respect Mr. Wilson is thoroughly English: his notorious dislike of the Germans is equaled only by his distrust of the French and Italians. With President Johnson, on the other hand, he should find it easy to establish an effective relationship. All that is needed on the American side is a little tact and a willingness to overlook minor misdemeanors such as the nationalizing of steel. This kind of understanding is likely to be forthcoming. After all, the difference between mixed-economy, welfare-state Labourism, and full-blooded socialism, is well understood in Washington, however obscure it may be to the disconsolate followers of Senator Goldwater.

* * *

ON THE TECHNICAL merits of the MLF I pronounce no opinion. Laymen are liable to trap themselves in such matters, and in any case the technicalities are irrelevant. Issues of this kind are settled on political and strategic grounds, whatever the experts may have to say. One heard a good deal at first about those projected twenty-five surface vessels being sitting ducks for a counter-attack, or even a first strike. If this talk has recently fallen silent, it is surely not because someone has thought up a new technical argument, but because it suits all concerned to pretend that vulnerability does not really matter. What matters—if the leading Anglo-American journals can be trusted—is moving NATO out to sea where the French cannot get at it. For Paris, on the other hand, the MLF has become "America's Foreign Legion." For the rest, all the current talk is about Perfidious Albion, the German Menace, or de Gaulle's alleged tendency to mistake himself for Louis XIV. Meantime, one notes that the French Communists are beginning to be suspected in some quarters of being Soft on Gaullism. Certainly *L'Humanité* is a good deal less shrill these days than it used to be. Its editorialists continue to blast Gaullist home policy, but in foreign affairs their principal complaint now is that Paris has not so far renounced its alliance with Bonn. They are, of course, against the French nuclear *force de frappe*—mainly on the grounds of cost—but not very violently. It clearly suits them to make anti-nuclear noises, but their heart is not in it.

* * *

WHAT DOES all this add up to? Certainly not to a wave of sentiment against Gaullism in France itself, whatever his opponents may think of the General. Gaullism is not an easy thing for foreigners to understand. Even the French have had some trouble with it. Sympathetic critics—the editors of *Le Monde,* for example, or the group around the left-wing Catholic monthly *Esprit*—tend to be indulgent: partly because they still give the President credit for the Algerian settlement, in part because there is no viable alternative, and lastly because they have been irritated by the constant stream of ill-informed foreign criticism, much of it emanating from London, where the 1963 Common Market debacle is still resented. Meanwhile, "European" critics of the General, with Paul-Henri Spaak of Belgium in the lead, are in a difficulty: they resent his arrogance, but have to admit that he is a better "European" than his British antagonists. A year ago it was still the fashion in Brussels to assert that Europe could not be built without Britain. Recently, it has become clear that the opposite is true: as long as Whitehall has any option, there will be no surrender of sovereignty, and the only conceivable "Europe" in the circumstances is that of the Six.

This does not indeed exhaust the bill of complaints against the President and his government, but the French situation is rather different from what foreigners imagine it to be. The only certainty at the moment is that Gaullism will survive de Gaulle. Its roots are very deep. Some are historical and go back to both the Jacobin and Bonapartist traditions. Others are modern and, so to speak, "technocratic," or Saint-Simonian. After all, French socialism was founded by Henri de Saint-Simon, whose pupils today would certainly be Gaullists. Some of the leading Gaullists are in fact ex-Socialists (and since they are economic planners, this makes them more important than the better known ex-Communist André Malraux). The regime believes in planning and state control. Last June its Prime Minister, M. Pompidou—a banker, if you please—told a gathering of businessmen that France now had a "semi-socialist" economy, and that it had

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come to stay. Pompidou and his Finance Minister, Giscard d'Estaing, are somewhat closer to the business community than the more left-wing Gaullists, but even they believe in central planning. It is all quite different from what "conservatism" means in the United States. Incidentally, the latest French five-year plan, for the period 1966-70, has not, I believe, received much publicity abroad, which is a pity, since it is quite an interesting document. Among other things, it provides for a sharp rise in public investment, while holding back private consumption (though not military expenditure). The planners have apparently read their Galbraith. On the whole, Gaullism as a political phenomenon is somewhat to the left of British Labourism. In Britain they talk about socialism; in France they practice it.

* * *

SINCE THE New York *Times* does not seem to have mentioned it (its foreign coverage is altogether not as good as its admirers think), I hereby report that Color is now Britain's biggest social problem. Everyone, of course, has heard about the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Patrick Gordon Walker, losing his parliamentary seat in Birmingham because of this issue, which was played up during the October general election by his opponents. A few people with access to British papers may also have noticed that the Labour party club in this particular constituency operates its own color bar, and had to be formally rebuked by Mr. Harold Wilson shortly after the latter had delivered himself of a parliamentary broadside against Gordon Walker's successful Tory opponent. So here we have a situation where the local Labour party is out of step with the national leadership, and sentimentally closer to its Conservative opponents than to its own proclaimed doctrine.

This, however, is merely the tip of the iceberg. The fact is that Labour very nearly lost the election on the color issue, and would certainly have lost if Gaitskell rather than Wilson had been in charge. Gaitskell, in his high-minded manner, had committed the party (much against the inclination of its rank-and-file) to voting against the 1962 Immigration Bill limiting the entry of colored immigrants from the Commonwealth. Some voters remembered this and were duly resentful, though in the end Labour just managed to squeeze in (the half-dozen seats that were lost on this issue make quite a difference, given the government's slim majority). By now it has been stated that the 1962 Act will be prolonged and that Labour will support it, pending talks with the various Commonwealth governments to find a new formula. This last is strictly eyewash. Everyone knows the main provisions of the Act are going to stay.

How much of a problem is it? Not much by American standards, but Britain is a homogeneous society and not used to mass immigration of non-Europeans. In 1951 there were only 50,000 colored residents in the whole country (out of 50 million). Now there are 800,000, including some 300,000 from India and Pakistan. By the end of the century, even without further mass immigration, there will probably be three million. Britain will then have something resembling America's current problem, for no one in his senses believes that these people can be assimilated. They will form a visible minority—probably living in distinct quarters, though not (let us hope) in slums of their own making.

The interesting thing in all this has been the reaction of the Liberal Establishment, which runs the better class newspapers and the other communications media. While the two great parties in the end predictably agreed upon a policy of limiting immigration (though only after Labour had got rid of Hugh Gaitskell and his little coterie), the Liberals first stood out against it, and then very reluctantly conceded that there *might* be a problem—but only insofar as it was caused by bad housing. This happens to be nonsense, but it has become a kind of second line of defense. The argument runs that this is purely an economic problem, and that with a little good will, etc. . . . Not surprisingly, the people who take this line are themselves comfortably ensconced in middle-class suburbs and hardly ever meet a West Indian or a Pakistani. It is the working class who have to live with the new immigrants, compete for jobs with them, and put up with annoyances which seem trifling to their betters but are quite real to people who have to live in crowded neighborhoods. Hence the behavior—unforgivable on all other grounds—of the Labour club in Smethwick, Birmingham.

The Liberals, then, can take credit for having been more principled and more civilized than the two big parties, though to some extent their freedom from racialism is quite simply due to their being sheltered from the sordid realities of everyday life. There is, however, another and less creditable aspect of this concern for freedom of movement: some quite influential Liberal organs —the weekly *Economist*, for example—have consistently championed free entry on the grounds that Britain needs more cheap (colored) labor. Of course it wasn't quite put in this way: the formula was that the labor market should be made a bit more elastic, certain new industries were in need of workers they could not presently get, and so on. But everyone knew what was behind such talk. The *Economist* has for years been campaigning for a return to market-economy principles, though in England this kind of thing has to be tempered by a certain amount of welfare-state stuff (higher unemployment compensation, for example, so as to make it easier and less inhumane to fire people). Free entry of

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Commonwealth immigrants—subject to the rule that they must be able to find employment and not simply go on relief—fits into this pattern. That it may create social costs greater than the short-term economic benefits, is something those hard-headed accountants tend to overlook.

* * *

THERE IS MATERIAL here for reflection upon the changing significance of the terms "liberal" and "liberalism." In Western Europe, on the whole, they still mean what they have always meant: individualism and reliance upon the market, though modified by the Keynesian doctrine that the government may step in to regulate the flow of incomes, prevent economic recessions, and maintain a condition of (almost) full employment. This last is what "liberalism" now appears to mean in the United States, though it has also come to include a whole set of policies currently associated with the moderate wing of the British Labour party or the Swedish Social-Democrats. In fact I would go so far as to say that if the "liberals" one meets here had the courage of their convictions they would call themselves Labourites (if not Socialists) and leave the "liberal" label to that noted individualist, Senator Goldwater, and his braintrust of Chicago economists. But in that case what would become of Professor Galbraith? Would he come right out with it and admit that his faith is in no significant way distinguished from that of a Swedish Social-Democrat like Gunnar Myrdal?

I have a notion that this issue may come to a head, a few years from now, in connection with probable happenings in the less fortunate parts of the globe—specifically Latin America and India. These areas suffer from "population explosions" and structural imbalances which somehow don't lend themselves to Keynesian treatment. When that has failed, there is going to be a fairly simple choice: either help these people to modernize along more or less socialist lines, or let them rot, even at the risk of "Chinese" tendencies spreading. (I exclude the standard recipe of military dictatorship as being plainly no more than a stop-gap remedy.) How are Americans going to react? Some will doubtless echo the comment made by that eminent British *laissez-faire* oracle, Nassau Senior, during the Irish famine of the 1840's: it was unfortunate, he said, that only a million Irish seemed likely to die, since that wasn't enough to put the country on a sound economic footing (he had not foreseen the mass stampede to America, but that is irrelevant). Nassau Senior (as readers of *Capital* may recall) was also against limiting child labor: it would cut into profits, he said, and might even wreck industry altogether. Representatives of this school have never been lacking in arguments to show that any kind of interference with the operation of the market is bound to be harmful. How much more logical and impressive the thesis—one can see it coming—that a shock is needed and that massive starvation (say 50 million dead for a start) is the only way to cure the Indians of their socialistic nonsense and put their country on a sound business basis!

The trouble with arguments of this kind—leaving aside all talk of decency or morality—is that they are too narrow. Even if they made sense economically, they still would not make sense politically. This is because people are frequently unwilling to die quietly for the sake of economic logic. Some of them may perhaps do so in India—Indian religion is a great help in this matter—but they certainly won't in Latin America where Western attitudes have gone pretty deep (much to the distress of Professor Arnold Toynbee and his spiritual disciples). Other things being equal—and they won't be equal, what with China having got the Bomb—I expect Latin America to cause plenty of trouble before its surplus populations resign themselves to a quiet exit from this vale of tears. Even the clergy, now that Vatican II has left its mark, won't be of much help in this respect, though they may come to swallow the Pill for fear of worse. The Pill, by the way, seems to have become the last best hope of some of my academic colleagues. I suspect they are deluding themselves. It is a mistake to think that social problems can be solved by some technological gimmick. Neither the Bomb nor the Pill is going to get us over the hump, once starvation becomes an issue. These are likely to be among the major preoccupations of the 1970's—a decade compared with which the 1960's will probably look like a picnic.

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How We Are

MILTON HIMMELFARB

Like Everyone Else, Only More So?

The ancients knew it and we learn it anew every day: no opinion is so absurd as not to be professed by some learned man. A favorite and long-lived absurd opinion of many who are learned and many who are intellectual (they are not entirely identical), especially if they are Jews, is about the Jews. In a current formulation, by a Jewish professor-social scientist-intellectual-radical (M.M. Tumin, "Conservative Trends in Jewish Life," *Judaism*, Spring 1964), it is this:

> . . . it would indeed be radical in American politics if there were an identifiable Jewish vote . . . [which] stood for a morally radical position on the political spectrum. And it would be a beautiful challenge to America. . . . [But] what do Jews stand for in America? For a normal distribution of political opinions along the same spectrum and in the same proportions as non-Jews. . . .
>
> The American Jewish community seems to be living on the rapidly shrinking psychic income from the capital investment of Jews of the last two thousand years—or the last thirty years. What can it mean, in all honesty, for the average Jew in America to claim . . . a heritage and tradition of social justice, of respect for knowledge and learning, of concern for culture? He appears today to care for these things no more than anyone else around him.

Here is an important sociological generalization. It would be all true if it were not, transparently, all false.

First, as to the assertion that we "stand for . . . a normal distribution of political opinion . . . in the same proportions as non-Jews": if Tumin had tried, he could not have said anything more unreal. In 1948 *Public Opinion Quarterly* published a graph of attitudes toward guaranteed economic security. It was an ascending line from predominant hostility in denominations with a low proportion of manual workers, like the Congregationalists, to predominant support in denominations with a high proportion of manual workers, like the Baptists and Catholics. Seven major American denominations were represented by points on that line. One was not: the Jews, as low in manual workers as the Congregationalists, were as high in support for guaranteed security as Catholics and Baptists. When seven successive points are on a graph line and an eighth is completely off the line, the thing represented by that point must differ materially from the things represented by all the other points.

If a similar graph were to be drawn today, for *voting*, the Jewish point would still be off the line. In November 1964 we voted about 90 per cent for Johnson, i.e., against Goldwater—more than any other white group, whether defined by income, region, religion, or ethnic character, and possibly as much as the Negroes. (Of those Jews who did not vote for Johnson, not all voted for Goldwater. There were some Jewish votes for minority parties and some abstentions from voting for any Presidential candidate.) In Memphis, Tennessee, a defeated Republican candidate for the House of Representatives annoyed the Jews by his bewilderment about them: "I had hoped against hope that the Jewish group would see things my way. I am a businessman. They are businessmen. Apparently I didn't succeed. I am amazed that I couldn't. If ever there was a group that should be conservative, they should."

Earlier in 1964, in a Democratic Presidential primary, the Jews of Baltimore and the rest of Maryland voted against Governor Wallace of Alabama more than any other group of whites, and almost as much as the Negroes. In 1960, at each level of income, proportionately many more Jews voted for Kennedy (or against Nixon) than anyone else—including the Catholics, with their special reason for wanting to see Kennedy elected. In 1952 and 1956, and again during the Democratic convention in 1960, Jews were more enthusiastically for Stevenson than any other body of Americans. Tumin's "last thirty years" must mean the era of Franklin D. Roosevelt. We have not changed, in any essential way, from what we were then. In 1965 whose political worship is oriented to Roosevelt's shrine but the Jews'?

Second, as to a living tradition of social justice: in Tumin's 30's, as we know, Jews made up half of the membership of the radical movements. (Let us not inquire too closely into the beauty of some aspects of *that* "beautiful challenge," which as late as 1948 drew so many Jewish dupes to the other Wallace—who later

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realized he himself had been a dupe—that Truman lost New York to Dewey.) In the COMMENTARY symposium of 1961 a young man not long out of college reported scornfully that *only* half of the campus radicals in his time had been Jews. In 1964 half or more of the white young men and women who went down to Mississippi to work with the Negroes and risk their lives were Jews. Most of them feel as superior to the Jewish solid-citizen community as Tumin, but are they so totally different from the community as they would like to believe? Proportionately, more rabbis have gone South, and have been jailed or beaten, than any other white clergymen. The Jews of Baltimore are solid citizens, and we have seen how they voted about Governor Wallace. The Jews of Kansas City and Detroit, in referenda on open housing (to benefit Negroes), have voted for it in a huge disproportion to other whites. In California, in November 1964, two-thirds of all the votes were *for* Proposition 14, an anti-Negro constitutional amendment on housing; but two-thirds of the Jewish votes were *against* it.

In the 1961 symposium one writer said that he had always been for Negro equality, because members of one minority naturally sympathize with other minorities. Last year was a good one for testing his proposition that minorities naturally sympathize with each other. The commentators singled out, above all, Polish backlash and Italian backlash within the general category of white backlash. Governor Wallace and Senator Goldwater were not strikingly unpopular with the ethnic minorities—who, in the referenda across the country, were almost solidly against open housing. (Yet objectively the others have as much of a stake in a liberal society as the Jews. A country ruled by Goldwaters and Wallaces could not be a happy place for Slavs and Mediterraneans.) These differences between the Jewish and the other minorities just possibly could mean that when the Jewish minority behaves well, it does so less because it is a minority than because it is Jewish.

If we think of social justice to the poor, no others nearly so prosperous as the Jews, on the average, so ardently favor a welfare state. That is as much so now as in 1948, the year of the graph. If we think of social justice as including civil liberties, the polls consistently found a much higher proportion of Jews than others opposed to Senator McCarthy, and more strongly opposed. (Gallup, June 1954, "intense disapproval" of McCarthy: Jews 65 per cent, but Protestants 31, Democrats 38, college graduates 45; Roper, March 1957, gauge of attitudes toward McCarthy expressed as an index number: Jews -46, and executives and professionals—the next most disapproving group—only -18.) And does anyone imagine that the membership and financial support of, say, the American Civil Liberties Union are proportionately Jewish and no more?

Third, as to respect for knowledge and learning: let the colleges and universities testify. At a time when America has broken every precedent the world has ever known by sending almost 30 per cent of its young people to college, the American Jewish community is sending almost 80 per cent. Short of hiring truancy officers to round up abstainers, we could hardly send more. Or are we to understand that few young Jews are studying for advanced degrees? That would be news in the graduate schools. Or is the professor asserting that Jews have been turning their backs on teaching in the universities? The mind, as Mr. Wodehouse might say, boggles.

Finally, as to a deficient concern for culture: who, us? A few years ago someone in the publishing business, writing in the *New Leader,* estimated that something like a quarter of the buyers of books in the United States were Jews. (We are barely 3 per cent of the population.) In his recent *Culture Consumers,* Alvin Toffler is struck by the share of Jews among those who go to concerts, theaters, and museums, support orchestras, and buy works of art. What appears in print only confirms what everyone knows by direct observation. That is the way things are, and it is the way they used to be in Berlin and Vienna, Budapest and Prague. When the bourgeoisie stopped saying daily prayers, Hegel said, it started reading daily newspapers. When the Jews of those cities became modern, they put a piano in the parlor and the collected works of Goethe, Lessing, and Schiller in the bookcase; and many, especially the women, went so far as to play the pianos and read the books. Though the outer form may change, the inner substance remains. In America today, where you find culture vultures there you will not find Jews lacking.

As I WAS reading Tumin's jeremiad against the backsliding of the children of Israel, I had a feeling of *déjà lu*: Jeremiah, of course, and the other prophets; and of course the Jewish preachers in every generation, as Marshall Sklare suggested in the comments accompanying the paper, who were convinced that there had been a sad decline in piety and learning from the days of their grandparents. (A distinguished historian, Jacob Katz of Jerusalem, has discussed the difficulty of using sermons as data for social reality.) But then it came to me. Tumin was raising the standard of the Jewish 30's, and the Jews of the 30's had been judged in a 1944 symposium in COMMENTARY's predecessor, the *Contemporary Jewish Record.* Alfred Kazin, Lionel Trilling, and Clement Greenberg, among others, took part. Tumin might have been quoting them.

Kazin: ". . . timidity . . . parochialism . . . dreary middle-class chauvinism. . . ."

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Trilling: ". . . provincial and parochial . . . . no sustenance to . . . the artist or intellectual. . . ."

Greenberg: ". . . suffocatingly middle-class . . . . No people on earth are more correct, more staid, more provincial, more commonplace . . . ." (There was yet another symposium, in 1951, to discuss Morris Freedman's anticipation of Tumin —an accusation that the Jewish student was not what he had been in the former, great times. In the meanwhile, the woman who never let you forget her son the doctor was being overtaken and surpassed by the woman who was quick to remind you of her son the assistant professor.)

Tumin is no more alone now than the symposiasts of 1944 were then. In 1964 a Gentile sociologist issued a preposterous report alleging that the Jews studied by his graduate students were more prejudiced than others. The students had done the rating of prejudice. Probably most of them were Jews, and it would be no surprise if they were so eager to see the Jews as no better than the rest that they rated them as worse than the rest. Similarly, in a work that appeared a few years ago on the sociology of a Jewish community, the Jewish authors adduce the Jewish country club as proof that the Jews are as bad as the Gentiles. A few pages later they note that an applicant for membership had better have a record of substantial contributions to Jewish philanthropies. Is that bad? For the authors, it show that the Jews vie with each other in splashy expenditure.

Anyone who looks at country clubs must note real differences between Jewish and Gentile clubs, which ought to be particularly notable to sociologists. Since the sociologists in question are Jews, it is left to *Sports Illustrated* (March 5, 1962) to instruct us:

> Discrimination aside, Jewish country clubs generally differ from their Christian counterparts in a couple of ways. For one, the Jewish clubs put greater emphasis on charity; a prospective member is expected to be philanthropic (one club in the New York area requires that an applicant most have given $10,000 to United Jewish Appeal). For another, members of Jewish clubs habitually eat more and drink less than do Christian club members. It is possible to pick out the Jewish clubs from the clubs surveyed in Horwath and Horwath's annual anonymous study simply by checking the food and beverage expenditures of the average member. In one Jewish club, for instance, the average member spent $455 on food and only $134 on drink. At a comparable Christian club the average member spent $275 for food and $240 for drinks.

I have never been, am not, and do not expect ever to be a member of any country club; and I am mindful of what Lionel Trilling said in 1944 about American Jews being "self-indulgent" (that would go with eating more than Gentiles) "and self-admiring" (for drinking less, I suppose, and exacting large sums for philanthropy). The point of all this is that on the evidence that has been amassed, even about country clubs, no objective sociologist could deny Jewish difference.

Radicals and intellectuals may not know it, but they have enthusiastic allies in pretending that the Jews are like everyone else, only more so. Most Jews, at one time or another, believe it and say it, but those who say it loudest and most often are the kind one would suppose to be at the furthest remove from the radical intelligentsia. Tumin says that we stand for "a normal distribution of political opinions . . . in the same proportions as non-Jews." For its part, the American Council for Judaism is reported in the New York *Times* as having said, after the 1964 election, that "although [Republican] Senator Keating [of New York] had 'made the strongest appeal in history [?] to Jewish voters, as Jews,' he had made only small gains among Jewish voters." Small gains? In Jewish districts Keating's Democratic opponent, Robert Kennedy, did more than 20 per cent worse than President Johnson—and more than 15 per cent worse than his brother, the President, had done in 1960. He did not do so poorly in other Johnson-President Kennedy districts. The radicals and intellectuals, on the one hand, and the American Council for Judaism types, on the other, are united in insisting that in those things where we are in fact significantly different the Jews are like-everyone-else-only-more-so.

Why should ACJ and the radicals agree with each other in rejecting the plain evidence of their senses? For ACJ the answer is simple. They do not want the Jews to be different, and particularly do they not want the Jews to look different. Only Jewish invisibility could make them comfortable, and they try by incantation to persuade themselves—even they must know they are not persuading others—that the Jews are an optical illusion.

For the radicals and intellectuals, suitably, the answer is less simple. As the independent repetition of the words must demonstrate, they detest provincialism and parochialism. Particularisms are obstacles in the way of the Messianic Age, secular style. The Jewish community, or Jewish society, is particular and also—so they say—provincial and parochial. But they are upset because something is clearly wrong in this chain of observation, reasoning, and profession of faith. If they were not upset, so many intelligent people would not be saying so many foolish things.

You have to deny the special propensity of Jews, because they are Jews, for the very values you cherish. Otherwise you would have to ask yourself, more insistently than you would like, how attached you yourself would be to those values if you had not been born to Jewish parents. That sort of thing could shake a faith

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blended of cosmopolitanism and individualism. (Individualism is my shy conviction that when all is said and done, I have achieved my present moral and intellectual grandeur unassisted because in the inmost core of my self, I am—no two ways about it—morally and intellectually pretty grand. In a bourgeois this appears as the myth of the self-made man. "For he says: 'By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I have understanding. . . .'")

Worse still, you might have to recognize that: if you truly want people who care for social justice, respect knowledge and learning, and are concerned about culture—why, the hard fact is that such people are more likely to be found among the Jews than anywhere else. Since that has also been the hard fact in so many other places for so long, a good breeding ground for those desirable propensities might be the Jewish community, that distressingly particular and parochial thing. The Jewish community, though obviously quite awful, must equally obviously be less awful than practically anything else. Instead of your values requiring a dissolution of the Jewish community, may they not rather need a Jewish community to assure that an important base of support for them will continue to exist?

But to go on with such thinking could lead to all kinds of reactionary conclusions, possibly even of a personal character. There is a way out. All you have to say is what your predecessors said—that while the Jewish community may have been all right somewhat earlier, the contemporary Jewish community has practically nothing in common with it; and to say that, all you have to do is to prefer fable to fact. The difficulty is that each succeeding generation has less excuse for the preference.

Postscript

Engineers know that Murphy's Law is inexorable: what can go wrong will go wrong. Soldiers have Moltke's Law: what can be misunderstood will be misunderstood. The more general law is in itself neither pessimistic nor optimistic: what can be will be. Its unceasing operation was again revealed to me after I had finished the part about the unexpected agreement of the radical intellectuals and their opposites, the American Council for Judaism. A colleague showed me some ACJ publications, and there it was, almost as explicitly as if it had been written to make my point. What can be will be.

ACJ's *Briefs* for November-December 1964 was shocked because Rabbi Joachim Prinz had declared from his pulpit before Election Day: "A Jewish vote for Goldwater is a vote for Jewish suicide." It impeached Rabbi Prinz for three sins: violating the political neutrality of the pulpit, unpatriotically suggesting—ACJ is nothing if not patriotic—that the United States was threatened by something fascist, and thus encouraging Jewish self-ghettoization.

On Goldwater and a fascist threat, Tumin must be closer to Rabbi Prinz than to ACJ. Yet ACJ's *Education in Judaism* for June-July 1964 is filled with admiration for "Tumin's article": "provocative"—O.K.—and "well worth reading." Why so? Because he said: "No one has a right to self-ghettoization." Blessed word! For its sake much is forgiven and an embrace is offered.

Politics, as someone said when a candidate went back to living with his wife, makes strange bedfellows.

When Good Clashes with Good

For most of us it is hard to concede that a passion for one good thing can conflict with a passion for another good thing: if Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity are simultaneously desirable, why should they not be simultaneously attainable?

Professor Tumin takes it for granted that there can be no tension, let alone conflict, between a desire for social justice and respect for knowledge and learning. Yet when the Jews' zeal for justice is blunted, it is apt to be blunted precisely by their zeal for education. For instance, too many Jews in New York go along with Parents and Taxpayers in opposing Negro demands on the school system, afraid that meeting those demands will result in lowering the quality of their own children's education.

The particular issue about which PAT has been able to mobilize is the pairing of mostly white and mostly Negro elementary schools. That issue by itself does not come close to justifying the anxiety it has aroused, but if we look beyond we must recognize that as things stand now, there is in fact and in principle a tension, or outright conflict, between the requirements of justice for the Negroes and the requirements of first-rate education. What is more, Negroes seem to think so, too. In essence, they say this: "You whites have so contrived matters that we Negroes are unable to meet what you are pleased to call your objective, color-blind tests. We will no longer submit to rules that put us at a disadvantage. Admit us to your schools. If that means a lowering of standards for you, it will mean a raising of standards for us—and it is the only way for them to be raised. The lowering of standards will be temporary, until we have been qualified to compete with a fair chance of success. But whether it is more temporary or less, that is the price you must pay now for the profit you have reaped all these many years from keeping us down."

To which whites respond with the old self-evident truths—which apparently are not evident to Negroes—about impersonal tests and *les carrières ouvertes aux talents*. Jews, especially,

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hold those truths to be self-evident. They are our ideology and they are our self-interest, because we do well when they prevail. For us those rules, those truths, define justice itself. Most of us are not even aware of a tension between our desire for justice and our passion for education. In resisting Negro demands that give a secondary place to objective standards, we really think we are on the side of justice.

Negroes are more candid with themselves than Jews in recognizing privately, and often publicly, that their ideology is designed to serve their interest. A good illustration, in which a conflict over high educational standards figures centrally, is an alliance now in the making between New York City Negroes and conservative upstate Republicans favoring tuition fees in the City University of New York, against the liberal city Democrats fighting to maintain the century-old policy of no fees. Why should Negroes, mostly poor, ally themselves with conservatives, and why should they want to get rid of the City University's no-fee policy? Professor Lester H. Granger, formerly the executive secretary of the Urban League, lets us see why in a report to a State Senate committee. According to the newspapers,

> The report . . . suggested that by charging tuition the university could take in 3,000 students now excluded by entrance requirements that are artificially inflated [i.e., traditionally high] because of lack of facilities.
>
> Scholarship assistance to low-income students [i.e., Negroes, mostly] would limit the tuition charges to those who could afford it [i.e., lower-middle-class Jews, mostly]. . . .
>
> Professor Granger proposed that admissions to the university "be allocated among the various high schools of the city—a uniform percentage of the ranking graduates of each school." [This would mean fewer students from the better high schools, with their heavy Jewish concentration, and more from the other schools, especially the mostly Negro ones.]

Is justice on Professor Granger's side? If so, it is at odds with high educational standards. To prefer it to those standards would mean the city colleges having to abandon their old norms even more than they are alleged to have done already. Or is justice on the conventionally liberal side, which would retain the no-fee, entrance-by-merit, color-blind policies? If so, it would favor the well-fed over the ill-fed. One is rightly suspicious of that kind of justice.

IN NEW YORK today, the educational self-interest of Jews clashes with the educational self-interest of Negroes. It is a serious clash because education is a serious matter, determining how much your children will earn, what kind of life they will live, and what they will be able to do for *their* children. It is also a matter in which Jews have a big investment of tradition and emotion; and Negroes, of aspiration and resentment. Wherever justice lies in that clash of self-interests, there is going to be a fight.

Nevertheless, if there is no way of solving the dilemma, there may be a way of bypassing it. The fight is over the distribution of a scarce resource, cheap higher education. Make the resource more plentiful and there will be less need to fight. To do that, much more money will have to be raised in taxes for higher education. Fortunately for our moral credit and our consciences, Jews always vote enthusiastically for improving or expanding education, on any level —even when the direct beneficiaries are not our children.

The Case of Senator Keating

There must have been something about Kenneth Keating that caused the Jews of New York State to give him a far greater share of their votes (though not a majority) than they normally give a Republican. In looking for that cause, the first thing we can rule out is conservative trends. For the Jews who backed Keating, he was more, not less liberal than Robert Kennedy. Even if they were prepared to admit that the two were equally liberal, they thought a vote for Keating would serve liberalism better.

The most compelling urgency of all was to defeat Goldwater—crushingly, conspicuously, exemplarily. Keating had made an honorable, acceptably liberal record for himself. He won sympathies by firmly dissociating himself from Goldwater and so earning the hatred of the Goldwater enthusiasts that the rightist Conservative party ran a candidate and directed most of its propaganda against him. In voting for such a man, his Jewish supporters reasoned, they would be rewarding someone who deserved it and at the same time helping to discredit right-wing fanaticism. Especially if he won, but even if he did not lose badly—while Goldwater was losing very badly indeed, they hoped—the Republican party thenceforth might see the advantage of nominating people like him, and America might be blessed for a long time to come with the happy necessity of choosing between liberals called Democrats and liberals called Republicans.

Since his election to the Senate in 1958, Keating had been cultivating the Jews. He had made himself heard repeatedly in favor of Israel and against Soviet anti-Semitism, and he had seen to it that his person and his words came to the attention of people assembled as Jewish audiences and people whose names were on the mailing lists of Jewish organizations. During the campaign he could not be accused of neglecting this means of recalling to the Jews who he was and what he stood for. Neither could Kennedy. Both,

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of course, worked just as hard at doing the same sort of thing with the Italians, the Negroes, the Puerto Ricans, and all the rest.

To determine how much this helped Keating with the Jews, or how much it ever helps any other candidate who does it, is extraordinarily hard. The more sophisticated the politician, the better he knows that the Jews are fairly sophisticated, too, on the whole, and that you have to approach us with something else than simple pro-Jewish oratory. What we want is a broadly liberal program and tone, with a subtle, barely audible Jewish undertone of recognizable Jews on the speaker's platform and recognizably Jewish names on the letterhead or in the advertisements.* The Jews I heard praising Keating did not mention his specifically pro-Jewish stands, but presented the "unparochial" argument I have been summarizing. If anything, they were probably a little embarrassed by the Jewish note that was sounded. (Of course, there are Jewish voters, generally less sophisticated, who respond to political appeals couched in explicitly Jewish language. It is a question of proportions. More than others we have, or want to think we have, a broad view of political questions.)

But perhaps the subtleties are even subtler than that. Some who spoke the language of unparochial liberalism on behalf of Keating—and meant it—may have secretly wanted, too, to show their approval of his specifically pro-Jewish deeds and intentions. Either they were uneasy about it within themselves or they feared that even to mention it would get them lectured at by the other Jewish liberals they were talking with—who themselves may have had the same feelings, and therefore did not say anything aloud, either.

Possibly, also, some would have been more dissatisfied with the absence of an explicitly pro-Jewish appeal than they were embarrassed by its presence. If a groupy appeal is made to everyone else, if it is normal American practice, what could be the meaning of not making one to the Jews? Are we abnormal? Or so taken for granted that a candidate can believe that only for us need he not bestir himself? If a big part of politics is the competition of interests, and if in many things the general interest is defined as a kind of moment of the forces of particular interests, why exclude ours? Jewish abnegation would not abolish self-interest, it would only injure Jewish self-interest; and by remaining quiet while everyone else was shouting, we would be allowing the final consensus to be worse (from our point of view, at least) than if we, or our representatives, had spoken up, too.

This kind of thinking should not prevail at the expense of liberalism, but neither is it to be disdained. It has intrinsic worth. And let those who dislike it for extrinsic reasons, out of an anxiety about what the Gentiles will say, remember this: what is natural rarely puzzles or alarms, and nothing is more natural than the ties of like people with each other. One knows where one is with that. It is familiar, limited, of the same order as all the other ties of all the other families of mankind. More than a hundred years ago it was an American, a naval officer leading his squadron without authorization to the rescue of a British flotilla in China, who said that blood is thicker than water.

An apparent lack of such natural impulses, a devotion to what seems to others only abstract, general, ideological, altruistic—that is what puzzles and alarms. There is something almost uncanny about it, making for discomfort in the beholder. If that Republican candidate had had it explained to him that the Jewish businessmen of Memphis were voting as they did because they saw in the Goldwater movement a threat to themselves as Jews, as well as a threat to liberal values, even he might have understood. What no one can understand is claptrap—like a denial of anything specifically Jewish about the way all those individual businessmen, who happened to be Jews, also happened to vote differently from the Gentile businessmen.

* See Roma Lipsky, "Electioneering Among the Minorities," May 1961.

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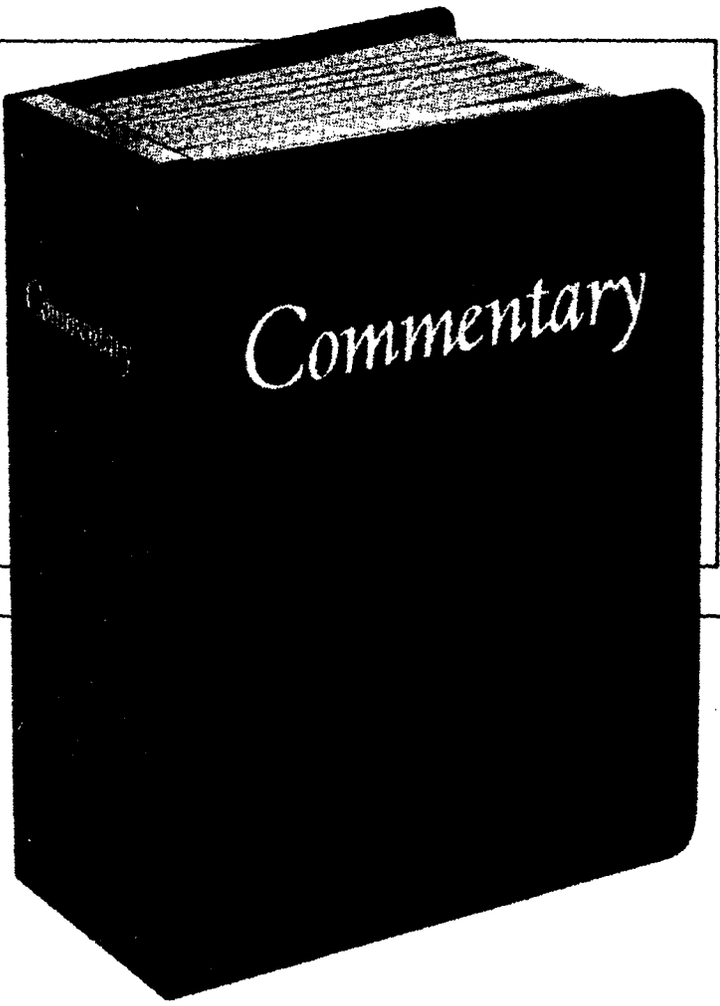

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ROOTLESS MYSTICISM

DANIEL: DIALOGUES ON REALIZATION. By MARTIN BUBER. Translated with an Introduction by MAURICE FRIEDMAN. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 144 pp. $4.00.*

Reviewed by ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

IN EVERY AGE, there have been philosophers, mystics, and poets who have sought for a relation between man and the powers which created the world and sustain it. To these powers, or single power, they gave names such as God, the Absolute, the Substance with infinite attributes, the Monad of all Monads, the Spirit of the Universe. Some forty years ago, Martin Buber chose to call the soul of all things "Thou," and the inner connection between man and the soul of all things surrounding him he called the "I-Thou" relationship. So understood, "I" and "Thou" became the primary words of human life, words which can only be "spoken with the whole being." As Buber goes on to say:

> The relation of the Thou is direct. No system of ideas, no foreknowledge and no fancy intervene between I and Thou. The memory itself is transformed as it plunges out of its isolation into the unity of the whole. No aim, no lust and no anticipation intervene between I and Thou. Desire itself is transformed as it plunges out of its dream into the appearance. Every means is an obstacle. Only when every means has collapsed does the meeting come about.

This connection can exist among men (where a direct response is possible), between men and animals, and between men and objects. According to Buber, God is a Person—personal being is included among His attributes—and so whenever we enter into an I-Thou relationship we are addressing God, the Eternal Thou.

Some consider Martin Buber a poet, some a philosopher, others a mystic. Almost all agree that he is an unclear thinker. He never really points to any means of entering into the I-Thou relationship; he simply maintains that its achievement is an instance of grace, the bliss of such unity being its own reward. The reader never learns whether men have any real duties toward the Thou, or whether the I-Thou relationship is anything more than a kind of spiritual indulgence. In fact, Buber carefully avoids any specific discussion of God or of man's mission on earth. His approach to these matters is very different from that of Hasidism, though he is the popularizer of this tradition and has written with admiration of the Baal Shem and Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav. The God of the Hasidim made claims on men and promised splendid rewards in the hereafter. Martin Buber's God—if he really believes in His existence—is not a God of revelation and moral demands. Communion with him gives perhaps the same satisfaction that Spinoza termed *Amor Dei Intellectualis.*

Because Buber is so obscure, each new book (or new translation) inspires the hope that finally the master will elucidate his position. Such hopes are again defeated when one reads *Daniel,* the translation of a book published in German in 1913. Like the Biblical book of Daniel, Martin Buber's abounds in parables and riddles. It consists of five dialogues: Dialogue in the Mountains, Dialogue above the City, Dialogue in the Garden, Dialogue after the Theater, and Dialogue by the Sea. All of them show that the young Buber was no less ambiguous and elusive than the older. The style itself, heavy and tedious, adds to the reader's difficulties. Maurice Friedman, the translator, and a leading interpreter of Buber, has provided a long introduction in which he tries to explain each dialogue and

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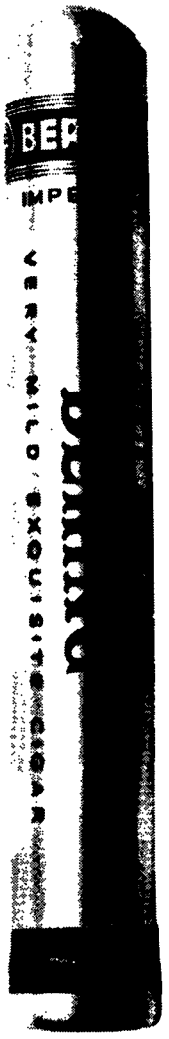

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to show the significance of this early work in the development of the master's thought. But the introduction makes the reader no wiser. This is not the fault of Mr. Friedman, whose style is clear enough; the most gifted commentator could not bring order into a work that is so diffuse in its ideas.

Those who call Buber a poet seem to be nearest to the truth. He writes about philosophic and mystical themes in a poetic prose from which, at best, a kind of metaphysical eclecticism emerges. The impression of this reviewer is that Buber adds little—and perhaps little can be added—to what the sages of the past have already said about man and his relationship to God. In his own fashion, Buber has paraphrased the ancient truth that at moments man can transcend his limitations to get a glimpse behind the curtain of phenomena. Like the famous Rabbi Levi Isaac of Berditchev, Martin Buber seems to cry out, "In the East, Thou, in the West, Thou; above, Thou, below, Thou; everywhere Thou, Thou, Thou." Rabbi Levi's God, however, was compassionate and morally exigent, the giver of the Torah, the hater of injustice, ready to reward virtue and punish sin. To reach Him one had to go the way of six-hundred-and-thirteen commandments, not to mention, fasts, immersion in ritual baths, ecstatic dancing, and prayer. But the way to Martin Buber's "Absolute Person" still remains anybody's guess. Between the "Thou" of Rabbi Levi and of Martin Buber lies an abyss which no amount of contemplation can span.

MYSTICAL POETS, unlike "pure" philosophers, cannot ignore existing religions and cultures and create their spiritual world from primeval chaos. Neither the mystic nor the poet can be rootless: each must belong somewhere and build on an existing ground, as did Giordano Bruno, Jacob Boehme, and Kierkegaard, to name only a few. Had Martin Buber built his system on Hasidism, as it seemed at the beginning of his career that he would, his achievement might have been great. Buber's insistence on freeing his own system from Jewish tradition and from Hasidism, and on initiating a universal mystic lore, has injured both his doctrine and his poetic force. While many influences are recognizable in his work, his thought proceeds from and returns to nowhere. Buber is without a spiritual home. Perhaps this is why he lacks the passion which makes the mystics of all epochs seem single-minded and possessed.

Buber's rootlessness is especially apparent in a work like *Daniel*. He appears here as what the Germans call a *Schöngeist*, a man of lofty ideas, a lover of beauty, but without the power to activate men and move them to change their point of view, much less their conduct. Whether in the mountain or by the sea, Buber's dialogues are all the after-theater conversations of an erudite and meditative man. His discourses on direction, reality, meaning, polarity, and unity have none of the zeal of conviction, the emphasis on good deeds, and the abhorrence of evil which are the bases of every religion, of every enduring mysticism. Buber's work—early and late—leaves one with the impression that there is no other way to serve God and find salvation except by concentrating on a merely intellectual relationship between man and the higher powers. A disciple of Buber need not serve God by action and sacrifice. He is free to do as he pleases. All his duties are in the realms of thought. It is finally a mysticism only for a cosmopolitan intellectual elite.

Buber concludes his last dialogue in these words: "We spoke of death, my friend Lukas, we have all the time spoken of nothing else. You wish to know the holy sea, the unity that bears life and death in right and left hand. You cannot know it otherwise than when you take upon yourself the tension of life and death and live the life and death of the world as your life and death. Then the I of this tension will awaken in you—the unconditioned, the unity of life and death."

Whatever young Buber meant by these words, no one was going to take them seriously and live by them. Not even Lukas.

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THE COOL REVOLUTION

UNDERSTANDING MEDIA: THE EXTENSIONS OF MAN. By MARSHALL MCLUHAN. *McGraw-Hill. 359 pp. $7.50.*

Reviewed by NEIL COMPTON

THE TYPICAL reader of COMMENTARY is living in a numbed and somnambulistic trance, self-hypnotized by his visual, linear bias. As for the magazine itself, it is an extremely hot medium (much hotter than *Playboy*) perversely devoting most of its space to matters which are peripheral to the real problems of modern culture. The ads are the best part of the journal.

These conclusions are forced upon anyone who accepts the main argument of *Understanding Media*. They are not the eccentric maunderings of a madman. On the contrary, Marshall McLuhan is one of the most brilliant sociocultural theorists writing today. I have been shamelessly pilfering his work for years, and others have been doing it too: it is easy for a practiced eye to discern little bits of McLuhan nestling like fossils in the gritty prose of many a literary critic or sociologist. For all that, McLuhan is a somewhat lonely figure with many admirers but few disciples. His cocksure wisecracking manner, his extravagant generalizations, and his maddeningly repetitive style tend to repel fastidious readers. Even a strong sympathizer is likely to find irritation and illumination fairly evenly blended in his books. *Understanding Media* contains the mixture as before.

McLuhan, who is a professor of English at St. Michael's College and Director of the Institute of Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto, brings an essentially Thomist and Catholic sensibility to a field of study which has been traditionally dominated by theorists with a Protestant or Jewish background. He acknowledges a considerable intellectual debt to the late Harold A. Innis (a Canadian economist whose contributions to the history and theory of communications have been inadequately recognized), but his recent books have carried him far beyond his mentor and, indeed, outside the main stream of contemporary thought about culture.

He began as a relatively conventional observer of the mass media. *The Mechanical Bride* is a brilliant application of the techniques of iconography and literary criticism to such hitherto neglected phenomena as advertisements, comic strips, and newspapers. Though McLuhan now apparently repudiates its essentially hostile and derisive tone, many will feel that this devastatingly witty and high-spirited work is his finest achievement. Between *The Mechanical Bride* and his next book, McLuhan edited *Explorations,* an extraordinary periodical devoted to the study and criticism of all types of communication. In its pages one can trace McLuhan's gradual shift from ironic contemplation to total immersion in the destructive element of modern media. The Old and New Testaments of the faith that followed this baptism are *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) and its successor *Understanding Media.*

Subtitled "The Making of Typographic Man," *The Gutenberg Galaxy* set out to analyze and describe the distortion of human consciousness that has resulted (according to McLuhan) from the domination of Western civilization by the phonetic alphabet and its offspring, the printed book. By translating all human experience into the visual, linear, sequential form of written sentences, and by mass-producing the result with the aid of the printing press, Western man has tended to alienate himself from deep involvement with his environment. "Numbed" into a "hypnotic trance" by his visual bias, "the bookman of detached private culture" cannot cope with reality until it is processed into the linear, mechanical order of print. The orderly, rational eye (in contrast to the muddled, emotional ear) is the individuating organ *par excellence*—such terms as "perspective," "point of view," "outlook" suggest this quality. The visually oriented civilization which reached its apogee early in this century culminated in the hard, lonely, anxious personality of the

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rugged individualist. It also developed techniques and institutions to serve him, all based on the linear rationalization of phenomena: the assembly line, the state examination system, the stock market, suburbia, bureaus of standards, research laboratories, and railway timetables.

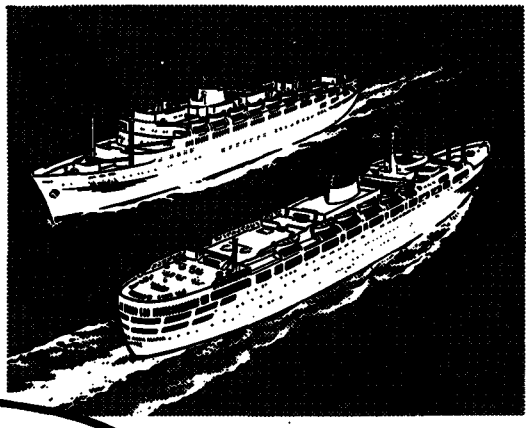
THE ARGUMENT that there is some connection between these phenomena and our print-dominated culture is difficult to resist. All the same, in this book and its successor McLuhan faced an insoluble problem of method. How is it possible to diagnose and attack the distortions caused by phonetic literacy while using the very medium one is deploring? He has tried to resolve the dilemma by arranging his books in a "mosaic" of separate chapters which can be read in any order (thus making necessary a good deal of repetition). Since he regards the idea of cause and effect as an illusory linear abstraction, McLuhan tries to avoid making use of it, preferring to suggest the kind of configuration implied by the word "galaxy." Unfortunately, the English language does not lend itself very well to this kind of non-syntactical juxtaposition, so he is forced to fall back on such vague rhetorical flourishes as "That is why . . ." or "In the same way. . . ." His favorite mode of discourse is the enthymeme (or incomplete syllogism) which bookmen of detached private character like myself may be forgiven for thinking a vice rather than a revolutionary method of apprehending the universe. Nevertheless, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* is a most exciting book, full of brilliant insights (if one may risk a visual metaphor) and valuable information about communication habits past and present. McLuhan is immensely well-read for a man with a grudge against print, and he quotes liberally from some fascinating and out-of-the-way writers and scholars.

If the earlier book concentrated on the past and its consequences for the present, *Understanding Media* is mainly devoted to the contemporary revolution in communications and its consequences for the future. It ought to be the fulfillment of the author's career as a cultural prophet. Unfortunately, though there is more than enough to reward persevering readers (one of the publisher's editors complained to McLuhan that 75 per cent of his material is new), the book lacks the concentration and coherence of its predecessor. Perhaps it was produced in haste: there are certainly a great many misprints and errors of fact.

MCLUHAN CALLS the media "extensions of man" because they each increase the range and power of one part of the human body. In so doing, they effect a modification of consciousness by altering the ratio between the various senses and faculties. His definition of a medium is broad: he devotes twenty-six separate chapters not only to such obvious media as paper, print, telegraph, and radio, but also to wheels, weapons, clocks, money, and houses.

The half-truth which he wishes to establish is that "the medium is the message." He scoffs at old fogies who fuss over the content of books, newspapers, radio and television programs, but ignore the more radical modifications of sensibility effected by the media themselves. So far as he is concerned, "the 'content' of a medium is like the juicy bit of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watch-dog of the mind." So much for COMMENTARY, documentary film, television news, and Walter Lippmann. So much also for *Understanding Media*!

The message of the mechanical media of the past, he says, has been fragmentation and dissociation. By "extending" only one sense or part of the body, print, wheel, and assembly line have made possible explosive increases in knowledge and production, but they have done so at the cost of human wholeness. What we call civilization is, in the West, largely the history of this progressive disintegration of man and his relation to nature. McLuhan argues, however, that the new electronic media such as television and computers are extensions, not just of one part of the body, but of the central nervous system itself. They extend the whole man.



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Electronic technology, instead of exploding and fragmenting the human body, tends to be implosive and integrating. It can make all knowledge instantly available, any event anywhere instantly present, and create factories that will mass-produce products individually manufactured to the taste of each consumer. It is making the world one village.

The crisis of our time is that our visual and fragmented culture is inadequate to the electronic technology with which we have to cope. McLuhan reserves his most mordant wit to jeer at literary intellectuals whom he thinks more remote from understanding the world in which they live than the teen-age fans of any disc-jockey. And so long as the educated remain obstinately wedded to the irrelevant values of print-culture, the danger increases that man will slip back into that "Africa of the mind" from which the alphabet liberated our remote ancestors.

McLuhan confuses his thesis by an abortive—and at times even ludicrous—attempt to categorize media as "hot" and "cool." A hot medium extends one single sense in "high definition" (i.e., well filled with data). Cool media are low in definition and therefore require participation or completion by the audience. Photographs, radio, and print are hot; cartoons, television, and telephones are cool. More exotically, lectures, hard-cover books, waltzes, "city slickers," FDR, the "hot line," and girls with glasses are hot, while seminars, paperback books, the twist, farmers' daughters, Calvin Coolidge, and girls with *dark* glasses are cool. There is the making of a maddening party game here. How would you classify LBJ, nuclear submarines, elephant jokes, or the *Wall Street Journal*?

Hot media are supposed to be explosive, specialist, and individuating, while cool media are communal, casual, and participant. The coolest of all is television. McLuhan is so anxious to distinguish TV from old-fashioned hot media that he tries to deny that it is visual: because the TV screen shows "light through" rather than "light on," and the image is a low-definition shifting mosaic mesh, it has a haptic or tactile quality—in contrast to cinema which is highly visual and therefore hot. Eccentric judgments of this kind seem to arise from McLuhan's apparent compulsion to relate every phenomenon of modern life to his theories. Almost casually he "explains" why Kennedy beat Nixon (what would he have said if a few thousand votes had shifted the election the other way?), why mesh nylons are more sensuous than sheer (are they?), why baseball is declining (is it?), why the guards let Jack Ruby kill Lee Oswald, and why B.O. is unforgivable in literate societies. His critics understandably make fun of this intellectual megalomania.

BUT NO REVIEW of *Understanding Media* should close on such a note. In this apocalyptic age, a pusillanimous correctness may be far more foolish than the wildest of insufficiently supported generalizations. While most scholars bury their heads in the private little sand plots they have marked out as their "field," McLuhan obstinately takes all knowledge for his province. Like the great writers that he admires—Rabelais, Cervantes, Pope, Joyce—he strives to be a man of "integral awareness." I expect to be equally inspired and infuriated by his next book.

THE BASIS OF DEMOCRACY

THE LIBERAL IDEA OF FREEDOM. By DAVID SPITZ. *University of Arizona Press. 210 pp. $5.50.*

Reviewed by GEORGE KATEB

FOR SOME TIME there has been a strong revival of interest in the political theory of democracy. Starting with the publication in 1951 of the impressive *Philosophy of Democratic Government* by the late Professor Yves Simon of Chicago, many contributions, some of the first quality, have been made to the study of democratic principles. The main questions giving life to these books are: What are the social and cultural preconditions of a democratic political system? What moral values inhere in democratic practices? What moral ends should be

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served by democratic means? What moral standards provide the ultimate justification for a democratic political system? These questions have acquired urgency from a number of developments.

There is first the widespread movement in the emergent nations of the world to introduce or strengthen democratic institutions, in imitation of their former Western rulers; or at least to make certain democratic pretenses. Allowed the unbelievable delight of witnessing the deliberate creation of political forms and methods, political scientists have responded with serious thought, especially about the preconditions of democracy. Second, the labor of political scientists in the past thirty or forty years is now composing itself into a fairly coherent picture of the workings of democracy in America. In many ways, that picture does not correspond to pious expectations; and to the degree that it does not, appropriate adjustments in the moral theory of democracy seem called for and are being made. Studies of the formation of policy on all levels of government and in all branches underline the decisive importance of organized interests and private influence, and reduce almost to nullity the role of individual conscience or popular sentiment. On the other hand, studies of voting behavior indicate large amounts of apathy, ignorance, and irrationality in the mass electorate. The conclusion that apparently begs to be drawn—and a number of political scientists have drawn it—is that "the people" do not rule, *and* thank heaven for that. The most they have and the most they deserve is a vague final control over a few lines of (mostly domestic) policy: let political theory assimilate the political facts of life. Sometimes in disappointment, sometimes too casually, a harsh realism has indeed come to characterize American democratic thought.

Last, and most important, the onslaught of critical philosophy has induced a terrible self-consciousness about the justification of democracy. Claims for the superiority of the democratic form of government have traditionally rested mainly on moral grounds. Yet the status of moral claims of any sort has been subjected to rather shriveling treatment by logical positivists and others. How then to restate the case for democracy? One of the most interesting efforts has been made by Professor David Spitz of Ohio State University. In two earlier books—*Patterns of Anti-Democratic Thought* (1949), and *Democracy and the Challenge of Power* (1958)—Spitz ably championed democratic practice against fascist and aristocratic misrepresentations, and at the same time tried to clarify and assess its inevitable deficiencies. He was of the company of realists, but had measure and generosity. The present volume, a collection of articles and reviews published from 1949 to 1961, carries on the same fight, and gets in some good blows against the neo-conservatives. However, the real usefulness of the book comes from a few essays in which Spitz takes up the theme of the moral claims of democracy.

ALL HIS WORK makes it unmistakably clear that Spitz's ultimate commitment is to the dignity and welfare of the individual, and that he is a democrat because of this commitment. But he goes to great pains to disguise his position, not primarily because the exigencies of persuasion make that tactic preferable, but mostly because he believes that any commitment is philosophically suspect. Spitz therefore strives—and this is characteristic not only of him but of many other American political scientists—for the least moralistic defense of democracy possible. It is a defense of democracy that tries to do without the growth of character as its final argument. It is a defense that rejects or ignores such views as that democracy is more liable to pursue the common good, or can make by far the best claim to having rationality in decision and justice in outcome. It is a defense that goes out of its way to show that democracy does not mean that the people actually rule: the principle of self-determination has no place. It is a defense that throws away almost the whole tradition. What then does it make do with?

The answer is to think of democracy as essentially a process of social compromise, or as a procedure for permitting social changes to come about peacefully and conflicts of interests to be softened or resolved. The nature of those changes and compromises and the merits of those interests remain exempt from the scrutiny of the theorist, as long as they do not impair or threaten to abolish the process or procedure. The system responds to pressure, and interests benefit according to their strength. The system is sensitive to novelty, and facilitates the translation into political power of all other kinds of power. It thus turns out that the decisive, *publicly stated* argument for democracy is that it is the political system most likely to preserve domestic peace, once there are the appropriate social and cultural preconditions. In addition, civil liberties and legal protections are to be justified not as instrumental to the integrity of the individual and to his self-realization, but as necessary to the working of the democratic process. Changes and compromises emerge democratically only if all are free to speak and write as they please, to associate, to vote, to come and go. Within the limits of the law, the uses to which freedom is put do not concern the democratic theorist. No ideal of human character or social arrangement, no scale of priorities, upholds the process. In his private capacity, the theorist will have his opinions and fight for them. As a philosopher, however, he knows that it is philosophy itself which tells him to make peace the heart of the matter.

The key to Spitz's position is a theory of moral judgment. This is where philosophy enters to make the defense of democracy a formalist enterprise, all idealism suppressed. Spitz is convinced that the doctrine generally called moral relativism is correct. An old doctrine of many parts, moral relativism has often worked to make men more humane, and to liberate them from a superstitious attachment to their codes. In its best form, the doctrine teaches that though there are a few standards all societies must follow simply to make any common life possible (prohibitions against murder, lying, theft), the expectation is that societies will vary greatly from each other in their moral tone. For whatever reasons,

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different societies will exploit different human qualities, liberate some energies while subduing others; will interpret reality differently and therefore guide behavior by different beliefs. The only acceptable response to this variety is not disgust or condescension, but an enlarged sense of human possibility and a deepened sense of the tyrannous force of circumstances. Moral judgments made by one culture about another become suspect; but the quest for the essentially or uniquely human may go on. In its worst form, moral relativism teaches that values or standards have no necessary connection to human nature, or to reason or knowledge; that the expression of a judgment is merely an expression of feeling; that no rules govern moral discourse or the use of evaluative words; that the foundation of any system of values is an arbitrary choice; and that consequently everyone is entitled to judge as he pleases: "it's all relative."

Spitz's thought has touches of the best and worst in relativism, together with other relativist ingredients. He is driven to his relativism by the weaknesses he sees in every absolutist doctrine—for instance, natural law; he would be an absolutist if he could, but since he cannot, he must be a relativist. To be an absolutist means that one can *prove* that his standards of moral judgment are correct, as one can prove that sugar will dissolve in water. But no one has ever proved the validity of his values to Spitz's satisfaction. No one is therefore allowed to make a special claim for his values. It is only human to have values; but Spitz's own, those of a welfarist democracy, are not subject to discussion, are not meant to appeal to reason or to be intellectually persuasive or defensible, and are to be put aside in favor of a basically non-moral rationale for democracy. There is no way of proving that democracy is morally superior to any other form of government, or that in a democracy one faction is morally superior to another. Spitz admiringly cites some silly words by Oliver Wendell Holmes: ". . . all law means I will kill you if necessary to make you conform to my requirements." "... there is no superior arbiter—it is one of taste—but when men differ in taste as to the kind of world they want the only thing to do is to go to work killing."

SPITZ seems to think that if there were some transcendental source for it, a moral principle would be proved valid. But that a principle coincides with, say, God's eternal will does not touch the question of its validity; such a coincidence only provides motives to obedience, like fear or love. Rather, the validity of a moral principle or judgment is proved when its derivation from an ultimate standard or from some ideal of human character is demonstrated. The very concept of morality, in turn, rules out certain ultimate standards like "might makes right," "justice is the interest of the stronger," "some men can be treated as means only," "the reason of state is beyond good and evil." Moral men when they make a political judgment must depend only on some kinds of ultimate standard: the common good, the survival of society, the greatest happiness of all, the elimination of avoidable suffering, the good life. One is not free to go beyond such considerations and still think that one is offering a moral argument. The contest between democracy and fascism is not between moral equals, between forces equally desirous of being moral. The choice of an ultimate standard is problematic, but certainly not arbitrary.

Furthermore, the real perplexities in moral discourse involve not so much the choice of ultimate standards, but other things. For example: the difficulty of interpreting the ultimate standard, which is always stated in the most general language; the difficulty of deriving secondary principles from that standard for the sake of practical application; the difficulty of doing all the things the standard seems to require because good things may be incompatible with each other; the differences in knowledge between moral disputants; the differences in moral sensibilities. A strong characteristic of democracy is that it institutionalizes these perplexities. It allows for the free play of divergent interpretations, applications, sensibilities—within constitutional limits. But the strife in democracy

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is more like a family quarrel than the clash of ignorant armies by night.

IT IS NOT just a boast, it is a statement of fact to say that democracy, above all other systems, is moral in its procedures, and maximizes the chance that the dictates of morality will be embodied in policy.

The upshot of all this is that common morality *requires* a man to accept democracy, when the preconditions for it are present. There is no philosophical need to defend democracy on narrow, non-moral grounds, or to put it on a moral level with dictatorships and authoritarian regimes. At the same time, the results of the democratic process must be judged by the same ultimate standard used to judge the process itself. Extraordinarily hard as it may be to do so, competing policies must be evaluated, if only tentatively, in the light of the traditional democratic—or liberal, humanist, radical—highest end: the cultivation of human individuality, the enabling of men to enjoy what Mill called the "higher pleasures." There is no philosophical warrant to deprive democratic theory of its idealism. And without its idealism it is a poor, crippled thing.

GONE TO HELL

LAST EXIT TO BROOKLYN. By HUBERT SELBY, JR. *Grove. 304 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

AT FIRST the half dozen stories in this book appear to be little-magazine, big-city naturalism of a familiar kind: Farrell crossed with Joyce. Sordid surroundings, no apostrophes, the thoughts of inferior people as imagined by their superior creator, odd paragraphing, no joy, sudden spates of capital letters, low diction and ugly rhythms, an oppressive sense of claustrophobia—all present and functioning vigorously. In addition, the stories contain frequent episodes of violence and sex which can only be called pornographic: the sentences become long and driving, the action is described in emotionally charged detail, the formal need for such passages does not justify their intensity and specificity, and the book almost never generates other emotions of comparable intensity.

Because episodes of violence and sex are usual in such naturalistic fiction, Selby's pornography at first seems to be only an excess of a conventional element. But the excesses pile up, until, by even the gross standards of naturalism, the book is a shambles, a slaughterhouse. The most important of the excesses is the hopelessness of every character. Even the least appalling are in a state of despair without knowing it. A woman seems to be enjoying a pleasant spring day, but her creator soon makes it clear that she is sirupy mad. A man makes love normally and with pleasure (the only person we get to know who does), but he likes doing nothing else whatever. The moment of tenderness in the book occurs when, at a party of homosexuals, a transvestite reads Poe's "The Raven" to the accompaniment of a Charlie Parker record, but the moment is made possible only by the benzedrine which everyone is taking, so that the tenderness turns out to be no more than a brief truce in chronic and nasty hostilities. In sum, the few characters who are not positively in despair are imprisoned inside their miserable selves, and the pleasure which should release them at least momentarily serves instead to increase our sense of their hopelessness. Death, so far from being a release from woe, is presented as being the ultimate degradation, fulfilling nothing, demonstrating that all things are vile; and the corpses are desecrated. Naturalism does not go this far on its own. Selby is pushing for something else.

A CUE to what he may be after is given on the dust jacket. (Publishers commonly ask a writer and some of his friends to help with, or even to write, flap copy for his book.) Gilbert Sorrentino, a poet, is quoted as saying, "I would guess that Selby thinks of his reader as someone who might possibly want to know the truth about a real, living hell which exists in our own time, in the city of New York." And the anonymous flap calls the Brooklyn slum in which the characters live "the lowest rung of hell." Selby as a hell-guide: that makes some sense. It explains why he does not point at the typical, as naturalistic writers do, but looks for and insists upon the worst. Both author and characters constantly use all the low words in the filthiest way possible and use them because they think they are filthy (as one is no longer compelled to do in literature or in life). Harry Black, the central character in "Strike," is "the worst lathe operator of the more than 1,000 men working in the factory." When a baby crawls out on a high ledge in a housing project, Selby does not focus on those who go into action to rescue the child or who are simply horrified, but upon a gaggle of foul-mouthed women who hope the baby falls off and are disappointed when he doesn't; moreover, the baby is one of several children who have been locked for the day into the apartment by their drunk whore of a mother. Selby suffers no liberal sentimentality: the Negroes are no better and no worse than the whites, the Jews than the *goyim*; the homosexuals and heterosexuals, the married and unmarried, all are encapsulated in loveless lust; the em-

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ployers are avaricious, the union officials corrupt and lazy, and the workers slumped in nerveless mediocrity; whether you are a cop or a criminal depends on which side of a meaningless line you happen to be on; the children are becoming replicas of the adults about them and are so utterly without alternative that they do not struggle, or even desire, to become something else. The stories make much more sense as pictures of hell than as pictures of the actual world, for hell can be cartooned with a lump of charcoal on a dirty page, as the actual world cannot. The worst of a Brooklyn slum as a part of hell—a potent conception, and the book to execute it would be a dark masterpiece. Unfortunately, Selby's is not that book.

Last Exit to Brooklyn fails, I think, because Selby performs his function as hell-guide badly. To begin with, there are few indications of an authorial presence in the stories, and these few seem like crude slips which a careful writer would have cleared up in revision. "They had started the day expecting a deus ex machina and with its appearance their troubles and the strike would be over." "Deus ex machina" would never enter the minds of any of the characters in "Strike"; it comes from the journalistic prose style Selby employs when the story requires exposition. So far from being a wise and subtle poet, our guide to this hell-slum is the sort of careless journalist who uses a phrase like "deus ex machina" ineptly. For the most part, however, the author pretends to disappear, in the naturalistic mode, and let the material speak for itself. In fact, he guides so little that it is mere charity for us to assume this is a metaphorical hell we are being taken through rather than an actual slum. The cues to this assumption are on the flap only, not in the fiction itself where they belong, and the charity consists in our assuming the author must have had a higher, more moral motive for concentrating on the vile and depressing than a merely perverse, aesthetic glee in ugliness. Literarily, the fiction provides no clear way for us to tell what he intends. Maybe he is guiding us through a part of the actual world which we are to see as being like hell, and then again maybe he means us to see the world of the book as being a microcosm of the hell everybody lives in. "A part of our world can best be seen as a little hell": yes, and we do not need much, though we need some, guidance to make that journey. But "life is hell" is another matter. One writer made me believe that once, Swift at the end of the fourth voyage in *Gulliver*. But no other writer has been able to make me swallow so big a dose of pessimism, though a good many are trying to nowadays. As for "all life is only hell," that sticks in my gullet, I gag on it. Yet I suspect that Selby wants me to swallow as true this gobbet which not even Swift tried to force down his reader's throat.

I SUSPECT THAT this, or something near it, is Selby's intention because of the way he employs the pornography of sex and violence. A hell-guide normally reminds his reader that there are other regions in the world besides the hell we are going through, and he reacts, as Dante does in his trip through Hell guided by Virgil, with a wide range of emotions—hatred, alarm, disgust, pity, affection, sorrow, bewilderment, awe, regret, anger, fear. But Selby shows nothing whatever but loss and hopelessness, and every tendril reaching toward joy is immediately perverted inward to add to our sense of encapsulation. And revulsion is the main element in the emotions he arouses in the reader. By treating sexual acts pornographically, he stirs our disgust: the characters are not only alienated from one another by the act which could have brought them into communion, they are also alienated from us by the prose which could have brought us into communion with them or with the author. By treating acts of violence autonomously as he does acts of love, Selby robs violence of any possible moral significance and so of its greatest horror: when the characters brutalize and kill they are not expressing something as natural as lust for dominion, they are serving the author's drive to revolt us by perverting every impulse but the vilest. Let's spoil the good till there's nothing good left to like: that is part of hell, all right, and the rest is: since everything is vile let's revel in vileness.

I am not persuaded by this book that life is hell, though Selby has shown me some of the damned (whom I have seen before a good many times, in recent fiction as well as in life). I do not believe it is necessary for a writer to trap his reader in perverse, revolting emotions in order to make him imagine literarily something of what the characters' experience is like. I dread going to hell, I do not want to be locked in there and abandoned to pain, while I am in those doleful regions I need and pray for help to understand what is happening about and within me. However, if for some reason you want to go uncomprehendingly to hell for a few hours and do not know how to make it on your own, this book provides a reliable way to get there.

THE LONG VIEW

O STRANGE NEW WORLD: AMERICAN CULTURE: THE FORMATIVE YEARS. By HOWARD MUMFORD JONES. *Viking. 464 pp. $8.50.*

Reviewed by STAUGHTON LYND

PROFESSOR JONES surprises us at the outset. His title comes not from *The Tempest,* but from *The Bigelow Papers* of James Russell Lowell: *"O strange New World, thet yit wast never young,/Whose youth from thee by gripin' need was wrung."* The book's theme, I believe, is that America was both old and young, both good and evil, from the beginning. Jones urges caution in entertaining "simplistic notions that an American dream somehow mysteriously broke down in the nineteenth or twentieth century. . . . 'America' did not descend directly from Eden."

Thus he combats the proposition of some recent works on cultural history that the loss of innocence, the fall of the American Adam, was the main drift of our experience. These myth-makers, says Jones, "do not go deep enough in time." Were they to plunge into the 16th-century English writing which reflected on the early Eng-

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lish voyages and on the New World created by Spain, they would find, along with the image of an earthly paradise, a view of America as homeland of "the unpredictable, the abnormal, the inhuman, the cruel, the savage, and the strange." The dark night of the American soul began with Hakluyt, not with Hawthorne.

In his early chapters on "Renaissance Culture and America," "Renaissance Man in America," and "The Colonial Idea in England," Jones spells out the initial paradox. The discussion is weakened, however, by making the Renaissance function in too many ways at once: according to Jones, it underlay the urge to organize tight-knit communities under supernatural sanction; it informed the penchant, shared by English and Spanish colonists, for pageant and ceremony; at the same time it was also at work in the perfidy and cruelty of the conquistadors, who were contemporaries (Jones reminds us) of Machiavelli. But does this really say anything more than that America was settled by Europeans? Jones says: "It is perhaps a mark of long-run Renaissance influence upon the United States that among the great names in American history virtually none is notable for the *vita contemplativa*." Perhaps; but perhaps they were just busy. He concludes: "Machiavellianism, whether as finesse, fraud, or force, has long been a standard component of American political life." This is to play with words.

Indeed a persistent weakness of *O Strange New World* is its insistence that the "themes" and "influences" it highlights are still very, very much at work. Jones is magnificent in detailing the many-layered impact of the 18th-century imitation of Roman virtues, Roman place names, Roman politics (as in the terms "senate," "congress," "capitol," as well as in the concept of balanced government). One of the most effective sections of the volume shows how England modeled its colonization of America on previous experience in Ireland. These are dense discussions, piling up evidence for a restricted theme in a limited period of history. But when in a final chapter Mr. Jones tells us that 19th-century landscape painting, in its "(1) astonishment; (2) plenitude; (3) vastness; (4) incongruity; and (5) melancholy," bodied forth the total impact of America on the imagination, I, too, feel lost in too large a space. The conclusions of the "Afterword," precisely because they attempt to characterize the whole of American experience, are correspondingly banal. "America has been neither discovery nor creation but something of both." "America is, then, related to Europe by alterations of attraction and repulsion." "The colonial enterprise not only imported, it also reshaped, conduct." To be sure. . .

THUS THIS BOOK, in its mingled success and failure, suggests some important conclusions about cultural history. First, the longer the time-span, the greater the emphasis on timeless themes and motifs, the more trivial (by and large) the conclusions. The reason for this, it seems to me, is not that generalization is bad. It is rather that the cultural history of a given period is (by and large) more influenced by the non-cultural activities of the same period than by the cultural history of the preceding period. Hence the vigor and satisfying texture of a book like Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*, and the corresponding insipidity of so many latter-day quests for a homogeneous, timeless American consensus.

Consider, for example, the treatment of the American Revolution in *O Strange New World*. In his chapter on "The Radical Republic," Jones's argument is that America seemed uniquely revolutionary both to Europe and to itself. On the one hand, there was a "populist" tradition of mob action, on the other, a "progressive" belief that America was "opening a new epoch in the history of mankind." Mob action is viewed as a timeless form. The KKK, Coxey's Army, the Civil Rights Movement are accordingly brought forward as "forms of mass action" which "follow the pattern established in seventeenth-century America." We do not learn what a given group of rioters wanted, whether (after all) there were essential differences between the Stamp Act rioters and a lynch mob. We are given a spectator's view: a

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view which notices certain external similarities among widely divergent phenomena, but remains superficial. Likewise, in describing the history of the idea that America was a utopia, Jones is content to characterize changes in the image: he does not come to grips with changes in the thing itself.

The "progressive" vision of a boundless American future is confronted when Jones turns to the meaning for Americans of Montesquieu's reading of the Roman past. Here we are deftly introduced to the concepts, accepted by the Fathers, that republics depend on the existence of a frugal and egalitarian public spirit; that corruption in this spirit will lead to the downfall of the republic; that competitive emulation, the spring of human action, must be chaneled into virtue if the republic is to survive. Here Jones stops. But there was a further teaching of Montesquieu's, borrowed from Plato, which Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, and Madison faced with sturdy pessimism. This was the idea that growth of commerce will inevitably corrupt the republican spirit. I believe, the septuagenarian Jefferson wrote to Adams in December 1819, that Caesar's Rome was so corrupted that Brutus, even had he been victorious, could not have restored the republic. You are right, replied Adams; "I fear the English reformers will have no better success"; and as to America: "Will you tell me how to prevent riches from becoming the effects of temperance and industry? Will you tell me how to prevent riches from producing luxury? Will you tell me how to prevent luxury from producing effeminacy intoxication extravagance Vice and folly?"—that corruption which is death to republics.

AMERICA *has* changed, and this is the second "lesson" I should like to suggest. It is not necessary to use value-laden terms to recognize, as Jones himself does, that America was a "radical republic" in the eyes of the rest of the world until about the time of World War I, and has not been so since. Granting that both the spirit of the Lord and the spirit of capitalism have been with us from the beginning, it remains the case that their relative importance has changed. As Jones observes:

> One director of a Rockefeller corporation said that all the meetings opened with prayer and that one chair was kept empty to honor Jesus. It seems to have occurred to nobody that the symbol might be ambiguous.

What is missing, ultimately, in *O Strange New World* is the sense of an author who has peered beneath the surface of the society of his own time. The scholar, like the citizen, must be prepared to recognize the vertigo of violence in the 20th as well as in the 17th century. Armed by this vision, he can then take his stand with the stoicism of John Adams: "Yet all these ought not to discourage us from exertion, for I believe no effort in favour of Virtue is lost, and all good Men ought to struggle both by their Council and Example."

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER'S *latest collection of stories,* Short Friday, *was recently brought out by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.*

NEIL COMPTON'S *essay "Television and Canadian Culture" appeared in our November 1964 issue.*

GEORGE KATEB, *who teaches at Amherst, is the author of* Utopia and Its Enemies.

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT'S *new novel,* In The World, *will be published later this year by Viking.*

STAUGHTON LYND, *a frequent contributor, teaches history at Yale University.*

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